

County nets more than \$9.3 million for homeless services

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San Bernardino County this week received more than \$9.3 million in federal Homeless Assistance Program funds, more than \$2.2 million for new projects and more than \$7.1 million for renewal projects that will provide services to hundreds of homeless individuals and families within the county. County agencies are able to use the funds, awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to provide transitional and permanent housing and supportive services for homeless individuals and families.

As part of the more than \$7.1 million for renewal projects, the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino was awarded a one-year renewal grant for more than \$2.7 million for its various Continuum of Care programs that serve homeless individuals and families with disabilities. The Housing Authority's affiliate non-profit Knowledge & Education for Your Success, or KEYS, also received \$241,021 in renewal funding for housing navigation services to serve homeless families. Combined, both entities received close to \$3 million in funding to serve approximately 300 homeless families in San Bernardino County.

"The award of this funding is a testimony to the good work being done by our homeless service providers in San Bernardino County," said Board of Supervisors Chairman, James Ramos, who also serves as Chairman of the Homeless Youth Taskforce. "This funding will help deliver much-needed services to our chronically homeless individuals and families with children. As a county, we must continue our efforts to support homeless programming and services for our residents most in need of services."

Part of the \$2.2 million for new projects includes a Permanent Supportive Housing Bonus award in the amount of \$1.5 million to provide funding for "Step Up in San Bernardino", a program that will be administered by Step Up on Second, Inc., a non-profit organization that has provided mental health recovery services and support since 1984. This funding will add an additional, much-needed 112 new permanent supportive housing program beds to serve the chronically homeless with mental illness within our county communities.

"This type of funding is exactly what San Bernardino County needs to continue investing in programs that help homeless individuals reach self-sufficiency. Permanent supportive housing allows us to build stronger communities and address the needs of the most vulnerable amongst us," said Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, Chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

"This record level of federal funding for San Bernardino County is testimony to the political and

civic will to get the job done for families and individuals," said Philip Mangano, former head of the White House Interagency Council on Homelessness and advisor to the Board of Supervisors. "The prioritization of housing and supports responsible for reducing homelessness in the county for the past few years indicates a maturing of the county's response and insures a strategy that is better for the community, the homeless person, and the taxpayer. A strategic trifecta to reduce the human tragedy and long misery of homelessness."

The Continuum of Care homeless programs build on the premise that housing and services need to be linked in order to ensure stable housing for this hard to serve population. Partnering since 1996, the County Department of Behavioral Health refers eligible families to the Housing Authority for the Continuum of Care programs they administer. The Housing Authority provides rental subsidies and administers the housing assistance. Behavioral Health provides services ranging from job training, health care, supportive services, and educational services, allowing the tenant an opportunity to obtain economic and social independence, when otherwise, they may still be homeless.

Through KEYS, the housing navigators work directly in reaching out to homeless families, and provide housing navigation, case management, and other supportive service referrals to a variety of other agencies in order to increase economic advancement and long term housing stability.

"The renewal of these grants is critical to continue to provide housing assistance to approximately 300 homeless families. During these difficult economic times and the increase in demand for affordable housing, we are grateful that through this funding we can continue to serve these families," said Housing Authority Executive Director Daniel Nackerman.

The award will allow the county's Homeless Partnership organizations to continue with the measurable progress already made in meeting the recommendations as outlined in the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness in the County of San Bernardino. To find out more about the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership, please visit the website at:

<http://www.sbcounty.gov/dbh/sbchp>.



MILITARY: State dedicates millions to help homeless vets

By [MARK MUCKENFUSS](#)

2016-05-06 15:04:12



Three weeks ago, Army veteran Pharroh Knight, 36, and his partner, Megan Stewart, 31, moved into an apartment in Moreno Valley after being homeless for a year and half.

Their housing came thanks to ongoing public efforts to make sure those who have served the country are not sleeping on the streets.

“This house is everything,” Knight said of the three-bedroom, two-story apartment. “It’s the biggest blessing ever. Being out (on the street) hopeless like that is scary. I never thought we’d get a second chance.”

Federal, state and local agencies are working to provide that second chance to veterans like Knight.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs recently awarded \$116 million through Prop. 41 to fund 28 new projects designed to help nearly 1,000 homeless veterans and their families statewide.

Cedar Glen II in Riverside, which would be built on County Farm Road, is the only Inland Empire project to get a portion of that Prop. 41 funding recently apportioned by the state.

Prop. 41, passed in 2014, provides money for building affordable housing for low-income and homeless veterans and their families.

Knight served in the Army from 2001 to 2004 as a specialist. He was deployed to Iraq during the 2003 invasion and spent about a year in the Middle East. Two years ago, he was attending school to get his degree in criminal justice when he and Stewart were evicted from their Victorville home in what they say was a case of fraud.

Between them, they have six children. Four are in foster care, but now that the couple has permanent housing, they are expecting to reunite with them.

While on the street, they both struggled with alcohol and drug abuse and lost their children to Child Protective Services. They went through rehab. Knight got a new job doing machine work. And, through assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, they got the apartment they’re now in.

LOCAL EFFORTS

Officials are committed to ending the homeless veteran problem in Riverside County, a goal the Board of Supervisors set two years ago. That move was spurred, in part by an ongoing national effort initiated in 2009 by then-VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to end veterans homelessness by the end of 2015.

That goal wasn’t met. But the number of homeless veterans did drop by one-third during that period and a number of cities and counties were able to declare last year that their homeless veteran populations were functionally zero. That means supports are in place to provide housing for a homeless veteran within a month.

In January, VA Secretary Robert McDonald visited with San Bernardino County officials to congratulate them on reaching that functional zero mark, declaring the county’s program a model for the rest of the country.

The City of Riverside was able to house all 89 of the veterans it identified on its streets last year.

A coalition of Riverside and San Bernardino county agencies was formed in 2014 to tackle the problem. Officials say connecting those services, along with an influx of federal money through both the VA and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, has allowed them to tackle the problem.

Los Angeles County also credits a cooperative effort between county and federal agencies in reducing the number of homeless veterans by 30 percent over the past year. There were still 3,071 veterans on the street at the time of the January count.

RIVERSIDE PROJECT

“Housing homeless veterans has been a key priority for the Board of Supervisors,” said John Aguilar, deputy director of Riverside County’s housing authority. “Partly in response to that mission but also in response to some new state funding, the county decided to make vouchers available for projects like this.”

He was referring to Cedar Glen II, which is being developed by Palm Communities, an Orange County company that specializes in affordable housing. The plans call for 50 units to be built next door to the existing Cedar Glen complex – the first phase of the two-phase project.

Mitch Slagerman, vice president of the company, said 26 of the new units would be for homeless veterans and their families. The remainder would be for low-income families.

But there still are challenges.

“We have not completed the funding,” Slagerman said. “The vast majority of money that we’ll get comes from the state tax-credit programs.”

Slagerman said his company will apply for that money next year, hoping to win funding by June. His company is successful about 50 percent of the time on its first attempt to secure such funding, he said.

Companies such as Palm Communities can first apply for housing vouchers through the county. When they receive approval, they apply for Prop 41 funds to support their projects. If they secure that money, Slagerman said, they have four years in which to spend the funds.

In January, a point-in-time count of homeless people in the county found there were 100 veterans on the street. Aguilar acknowledged the planned 26 units would not solve the problem, but said they would help.

“To the individuals who are going to be living in those units, I think it makes a huge impact,” Aguilar said. “Where we can, we want to try to make a difference and get these veterans housed.”

He said he expects the project to get funding and be completed.

“The county has done several developments with this company,” Aguilar said of Palm Communities. “They’re high performers.”

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By From staff reports

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Plan earmarks \$38.8B for county

SAN BERNARDINO — The newly adopted 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS) includes \$38.8 billion for San Bernardino County projects that balance future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental and public health goals over the next 25 years, according to regional leaders.

The Regional Council of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) formally approved the plan this week. If fully implemented, it would reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and boost the region's long-term economic viability, SCAG said.

The nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, SCAG is required by state and federal law to produce a long-range transportation plan every four years for a 38,000-mile, six-county region comprised of 191 cities and 18 million people. The RTP/SCS does not implement funding, but lays out a comprehensive strategy for addressing the region's current and future transportation challenges in compliance with clean air standards.

The 2016 plan identifies 1,022 San Bernardino County-specific projects, including express lanes on Interstate 10 (\$1.2 billion) and Interstate 15 (\$672 million), rail service from downtown San Bernardino to the University of Redlands (\$242 million) and an express bus route connecting Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, Ontario, Montclair and Pomona (\$246 million).

Several High Desert projects are included on the wish list, including \$560,000 for paving El Mirage Road in Adelanto, \$3 million for Victorville's Mojave Riverwalk project, \$46 million for the Green Tree Extension/Mojave River Bridge crossing, \$6.5 million for widening Yucca Loma Road in Apple Valley, \$17.9 million for widening Main Street in Hesperia to six lanes from Maple to Highway 395 (including widening the bridge over the California Aqueduct), \$1 million for widening Rancho Road in Hesperia from Topaz to Seventh, \$12 million for widening Rancho to four lanes from Mariposa east for three miles, \$36 million for widening Rock Springs Road and building a new bridge over the Mojave River, and \$5.3 million for widening and bridge work on National Trails Highway.

Of the \$38.8 billion, 26 percent would go to transit projects, 61 percent for highways and 13 percent for local streets and roads. These improvements would meet the needs of a rapidly growing population, SCAG leaders said, noting that by 2040, San Bernardino County is expected to add more than 660,000 people, raising the total population to 2.731 million.

Region-wide, the 2016 plan identifies \$556.5 billion in transportation investments. Among the benefits would be an 8 percent reduction in greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions by 2020, an 18 percent reduction by 2035 and a 21 percent reduction by 2040 — all meeting or exceeding state requirements.

"The 2016 RTP/SCS is a historic step forward for our region," said Cheryl Viegas-Walker, president of SCAG. "Transportation is critical to our economy and quality of life. This plan provides the framework for how we as a region are going to accommodate the needs of 4 million additional people over the next 25 years."

"Investments in transportation are critical to our long-term economic viability, as the RTP/SCS clearly demonstrates," said Hasan Ikhata, SCAG executive director.

Ikhata noted that congestion reduction and improvements in regional amenities as a result of implementing the plan will increase Southern California's competitiveness and economic performance, resulting in 351,000 additional jobs each year. Of those, 27,600 would be located in San Bernardino County.

The 2016-2040 RTP/SCS was developed in collaboration with local and county stakeholders and transportation agencies, including the San Bernardino Associated Governments.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/article/20160507/NEWS/160509755>

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ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Investing in transport

By [MICHELE MARTINEZ](#)

2016-05-06 14:26:07

For Orange County and throughout Southern California, the need for meaningful investment in our transportation system has never been greater.

Our ability to remain economically competitive – to attract businesses and high-quality jobs – requires an efficient network of roadways and transit options to move people and goods. A rapidly growing population is putting even greater stress on an already overtaxed infrastructure. Air quality mandates will be impossible to meet without a reduction in traffic congestion.

The \$556.5 billion in transportation improvements identified in the Southern California Association of Governments' newly approved 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy will allow us to not only welcome 4 million new people to the six-county region over the next 25 years, but safeguard our environment, bolster our economy and make our daily commutes to and from work or school much more manageable.

For Orange County, the stakes are particularly high. The quality of life we so treasure is very much at risk as the demands on our transportation network have surpassed our ability to meet them. Adding another 400,000 people by 2040 only compounds the challenge.

Working with the Orange County Transportation Commission and other stakeholders, SCAG identified 360 O.C.-specific projects totaling \$48.5 billion for the 2016 RTP/SCS. These include arterial highway improvements (\$2.7 billion), mixed-flow lanes along Interstate 405 between Highway 73 and Interstate 605 (\$1.3 billion), mixed flow lanes, climbing lanes and auxiliary lanes along the Eastern Transportation Corridor (\$632 million) and countywide bike lanes (\$458 million).

Of that \$48.5 billion, 58 percent would go to transit projects, 31 percent for highways and 12 percent for local streets and roads. Fully implemented, these projects would reduce per-capita traffic delays in Orange County by 40 percent.

It is important to note that the RTP/SCS does not implement funding, but lays out a comprehensive strategy for addressing the region's current and future transportation challenges in compliance with clean air standards. As the metropolitan planning organization for our region, SCAG is required to by state and federal law to produce a long-range transportation plan every four years.

The 2016 plan, fully implemented, would net an 8 percent reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions across the SCAG region by 2020, an 18 percent reduction by 2035 and a 21 percent reduction by 2040 – all meeting or exceeding state requirements.

Other highlights of the regional plan include:

- A reduction in per capita traffic delays of 39 percent and heavy-duty truck delays of 37 percent.
- A reduction in per capita vehicle miles traveled of more than 7 percent – and a 17 percent reduction in average time spent on the roads – as a result of more efficient land use patterns and increased transit.
- \$70.7 billion in goods movement strategies. Freight, logistics and related industries represent one-third of all jobs and economic activity in the SCAG region.
- A “fix-it-first” investment of \$275.5 billion in our existing transportation and transit network.

- \$56.1 billion in capital projects and \$156.7 billion toward maintenance and operations to expand our regional transit system.
- \$12.9 billion in active transportation strategies to promote walking and bicycling.
- A projected return on investment of \$2 for every \$1 invested in transportation improvements.
- 351,000 additional jobs each year tied to improved regional competitiveness and economic performance as a result of reduced congestion, better amenities and a higher standard of living. Of those jobs, 25,700 would be located in San Bernardino County.

Investing in our transportation system is no longer optional. Even setting aside years of deferred maintenance, building our economy, safeguarding our environment and meeting the needs of a growing population require expansion, innovation and funding.

The 2016 RTP/SCS is an important step in that direction.

Michele Martinez is a Santa Ana City Council member and incoming president of the Southern California Association of Governments.

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By Jose Quintero

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Baker fire station staffing a public safety concern

BAKER — As Memorial Day weekend approaches, public safety agencies will brace for one of the busiest travel weekends of the year. On any given major holiday weekend, the Auto Club of Southern California says that over 30 million people, including some 2.5 million Southern Californians, hit the road to travel over 25 miles.

During the summertime, popular getaway destinations in close proximity to the High Desert include Las Vegas, Laughlin and Lake Havasu. So naturally, holiday getaways bring a crush of traffic along Interstates 15 and 40.

According to Caltrans, an average of just under 40,000 vehicles passed through Baker on Interstate 15 on a daily basis in 2014. That same year, statistics from GLS Research showed that some 23.5 million motorists traveled to Las Vegas. The vast majority were Southern California motorists using I-15.

It's those numbers that concern Bill Mahan, one of three captains assigned at the San Bernardino County Fire Department's Station 53 in Baker. That's because the station is staffed only by one captain and one firefighter per shift. Mahan is lobbying his superiors to increase staffing at the station so there would be three fire personnel per shift.

"On a shift we have one captain and usually a limited-term firefighter, who has little to no prior experience," Mahan said. "Normally a fire engine has an engineer, the person who drives and operates the water pump. We don't have that here. So that falls on the captain or if their firefighter is qualified then he can do it.

"Say we are on a fire call I have my firefighter man the hose line as I'm talking to dispatch on the radio, managing resources, coordinating with CHP and running the water pump and making sure we don't run out of water. It's not a matter of things don't get done, it's just that things don't get accomplished as quickly as we would like. It's worrisome because lives are (in the) balance oftentimes. But our department is working on getting us additional staffing."

The small town of Baker has a population of 735 people, according to census data from 2010, but its fire station is responsible for 4,000 square miles, including the stretch of I-15 that runs north of Baker and up to stateline, Highway 127 up to the Dumont Dunes, the Mojave National Preserve and portions of Interstate 40. The Baker station responds to approximately 1,500 calls annually.

Statistics from the Barstow area California Highway Patrol support the challenges the fire station faces with only two firefighters on duty per shift.

According to CHP spokesman Ryan Camara, officers responded to 313 property damage-only traffic collisions, 92 collisions with injury and 16 fatal collisions on I-15 between Minneola Road and stateline in 2014. The numbers spiked in 2015. Officers responded to 371 property damage collisions, 148 collisions with injuries and 16 fatal collisions in 2015 on that same stretch of road.

So far this year, officers have responded to 101 property damage collisions, 69 injury collisions and four fatalities, he said.

Camara said he couldn't say if Station 53 responded to each of those collisions, but it's safe to assume they handled many of them.

"We have the equivalent of a large city's population traveling through Baker on a daily basis," Mahan said. "Granted they are all moving, but they are people traversing through my area that may need our service at the drop of a hat. Most cities responsible for a population of that size operate with at least three fire stations, with an engine of a captain, engineer and firefighter/paramedic.

"Normally when an engine needs additional resources, help is there within 10 minutes or less. We don't have that luxury out here in Baker."

That's the other issue that Station 53 faces. If additional resources are requested, Mahan estimates the response time for another engine is 45 minutes "at best."

Depending on the location of an incident, the station could request response from the county's Helendale fire station, the Fire Department out of Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow or even the Clark County Fire Department in Nevada, as part of mutual aid agreements.

Last week the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved a three-year automatic aid/mutual aid agreement between the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District and Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow.

The agreement allows both fire agencies to assist each other in the Barstow area at no cost to either agency. Automatic aid/mutual aid is provided on a voluntary basis and at no cost to either agency.

As part of the agreement, it will allow the closest fire engine response within proximity of an emergency to respond, providing the most "expeditious response to suppress fires and render other emergency services to the community," Third District supervisor James Ramos said.

"With this agreement we hope to capitalize on the types of emergency services already being provided to our residents," Ramos said. "A quicker response time in any emergency situation could be life-saving."

Mutual aid assistance includes fire personnel, equipment, materials, supplies and other services needed to assist the other fire agency.

The agreement will impact emergency response in the greater Barstow areas, including stretches of I-15 and I-40. The agreement only extends to mutual aid within these jurisdictional boundaries — I-15 in between Basin and Hodge roads, I-40 west of Hector Road, Highway 58 east of Hinkley Road, Highway 247 north of Slash X Cafe and also a stretch of Fort Irwin Road.

But the agreement mainly benefits the Helendale station. Mahan said MCLB firefighters generally provide assistance to his station on collisions south of Baker.

“The handicap we have in regards to response times is not exactly when we’ll get to a scene but exactly what we can do once we get to the scene,” Mahan said. “Say we have a truck fire. We have one fire engine with only 500 water gallons and two guys. There is only so much we can do. On a truck fire, ideally, it’s going to take at least a couple fire engines and a water tender or water truck. I’ve got to wait for those additional resources and I’ve got to do whatever I can until they get to the scene.”

Mahan said the station has great working relationships with the other two fire agencies and the CHP.

Camara said every CHP officer responding to a traffic collision is trained as an emergency medical responder, so they know first aid and basic life support. Camara said some officers may have additional training as emergency medical technicians.

“We work hand in hand with local fire departments, who are huge assets to provide assistance in dealing with injuries, medical calls, car fires and things of that nature,” Camara said. “We have a great working relationship with the firefighters in Baker.”

Station 53 also works in partnership with Baker EMS, a private ambulance company in Baker, staffed with an EMT and a paramedic, Mahan said. Baker EMS is a valuable resource for the station for responding to traffic collisions, but when it comes to responding to calls involving fires, there is not much Baker EMS can offer to the station, he said.

“If there is a car crash they will come with us. So technically when we are on calls we could have four guys on scene, because since they are not part of our department there are still only two guys that can operate the Fire Department’s equipment,” Mahan said.

“Any critical crash needs two paramedics or more. Right now we just have the one from Baker EMS and he’s got to bounce around from patient to patient if needed and if he can.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/article/20160507/NEWS/160509752>

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By [Matthew Cabe](#)By [Shea Johnson](#)

May 07, 2016 8:46PM

Apple Valley mayor claims Lovingood threatened bridge project

Victorville's pullout from a local wastewater agency prompted an official-led campaign against its mayor pro tem, who sought a seat on the Local Agency Formation Commission, the Daily Press has learned.

Apple Valley Mayor Barb Stanton acknowledged two days before Wednesday's LAFCO election that she'd rallied other mayors in the High Desert to vote against Jim Cox — who ultimately lost 15-3 — and Stanton claims these efforts were met with a threat from a top county official.

Stanton said 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood contacted her the day after an April 28 mayors meeting — when local support was pulled — and threatened to nix the completion of the Yucca Loma Corridor project should Stanton not put her support back behind Cox.

“Robert asked me why I'd withdrawn my endorsement for Jim,” Stanton said, “and he said that (the contract cancellation) with VVWRA was just meant to get attention. In the last part of the conversation, Robert said, ‘Chew on this and think about it very carefully. Your bridge will never be built.’”

Stanton said Lovingood was referring to the Green Tree Extension — the final phase of the Yucca Loma Corridor project — which rests in Victorville's jurisdiction and could include a \$12.5 million loan from San Bernardino Associated Governments should the City Council vote to approve [a loan agreement SANBAG's Board of Directors approved last week](#).

Stanton has since pulled her endorsement of Lovingood's re-election bid.

“These are the kind of games that make it hard for me to try and do my job,” Stanton said. “I'm mad, disappointed and disgusted. I really want to extend the olive branch and move on from this, (but) ... this crap can't be accepted, period.”

Lovingood said on Friday that he considers Stanton a friend. He called the phone conversation “civil” and “friendly.”

“I told Barb that it would be a shame if political bickering were to scuttle our breakthrough on this critical project,” Lovingood said via email. “My goal is to expand on the progress local elected officials have made in getting beyond petty bickering and cooperating for the good of the entire High Desert.”

Victorville's City Council unanimously authorized a 30-year notice to terminate its agreement with Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority in April, [according to a previous Daily Press report](#).

The Council cited VVWRA's “growing debt,” which Councilman Jim Kennedy said runs to the tune of \$120 million on about \$12 million in annual revenues, and how Victorville provides 60 percent of revenues to the agency yet receives only 25 percent of the Joint Powers Authority vote. Apple Valley, Hesperia and San Bernardino County service areas round out the four-member JPA.

Stanton said Victorville ending its VVWRA agreement and not wanting to work with the JPA could cost the Apple Valley millions of dollars, and she began rallying support against Cox thereafter.

Prior to Victorville's pullout, Cox saw growing support for the LAFCO primary-member seat between two votes in March and April. Seats are elected by a 24-mayor City Selection Committee.

Rancho Cucamonga City Councilwoman Diane Williams won the first vote 9-8, but Cox took the second 11-10, just two votes shy of the 13 needed to win. During the third vote on Wednesday, five mayors switched votes to Williams after voting for Cox in March and April, according to election results.

Stanton said she urged Rich Kerr in Adelanto, Bill Holland in Hesperia and Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre in Barstow not to endorse Cox as “a show of slow your roll” to Victorville on the VVWRA situation.

Cox told the Daily Press he initially believed he had the 13th and 14th votes after his momentum picked up in April, but added that the third vote was a foregone conclusion once Stanton began advocating for Williams.

“I knew it was over because I had to get 13 (votes),” Cox said. “Because if I were going to lose one vote in the desert, I'm going to lose (the election) anyway.”

The reasons for the campaign against him were appalling, according to Cox, who said he “toyed with the notion of withdrawing (his) name” after it became apparent he would lose Wednesday's vote.

“I'll let them have their little war,” he said, “... It's a deep wound, that I can tell you, ... (but) the damage is done.”

Cox said he didn't know if Lovingood made the threat to Stanton or not. He denied Stanton's further claims that he made a similar threat to Holland and that



Barb Stanton, left, listens to public comment during the Town Council's special meeting in November. Stanton recently rallied mayoral support away from Victorville Mayor Pro Tem Jim Cox's election bid to LAFCO after Victorville's City Council ended its service agreement with VVWRA in April. Stanton said 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood threatened completion of the Yucca Loma Corridor project as a result. JAMES QUIGG, PRESS DISPATCH FILE PHOTO

the LAFCO seat would've benefitted Victorville's attempt to annex Oro Grande, which Stanton characterized as a "huge land grab."

No attempts for annexation were planned or being considered by Victorville, according to Cox.

The unofficial policy in Victorville had previously been to help adjoining cities as long as it didn't hurt Victorville residents, Cox said, which is why the city has tried to be a "good neighbor" to Apple Valley with the Green Tree Extension project, even if it isn't a priority.

"(We'd) rather have money to fix roads for Victorville residents," Cox said. "... (Now) we'll only help if it helps us. We're not going to take money from our residents to help someone who keeps kicking us in the shins."

Amid the tumult, Lovingood's alleged threat was described as "misunderstood" on Stanton's part by Victorville City Councilman and SANBAG President Ryan McEachron, who said losing support from his fellow Council members for approval of the Green Tree Extension SANBAG loan is now a concern.

"I believe that I will still have the concurrence of the majority of my Council to move forward on this," McEachron said, "but it's a legitimate concern. I don't think (Lovingood) threatened that this would never happen, and I told (Stanton) the same. I'm concerned if I can hold my Council to have the votes to move forward on the loan and the project."

McEachron said an email he sent to Stanton and others the day before Wednesday's vote was an attempt to get the mayors to "think about how we've all worked regionally together for the past four or five years" because he didn't want to see that undone by one vote for LAFCO.

Bill Holland also spoke to the unity of High Desert cities; however, he said Victorville's VVWRA decision was the city essentially saying it was more important than that unity.

"It was a conscious effort to throw out all the hard work to unite the cities over the last six years," Holland said. "I've busted my hump for the last six years bringing unity to the councils ... (and) you don't throw out the unity of the High Desert."

Holland — who's campaigning for 1st District supervisor — expressed outrage with Lovingood, as well, saying the supervisor shouldn't have gone to bat for Victorville.

"If he needed to pick sides, he should've chosen his unincorporated constituents who don't receive representation from city councils," Holland said. "Lovingood should be ashamed of himself ... We are all the 1st District. Don't choose favorites. It smacks of the good-old-boy, cigar-and-back-slapping club."

Victorville received a notice several months ago of an opening on the LAFCO board, according to Cox, who said LAFCO was encouraging having mountain-desert representation.

"This is not about me," Cox said of the LAFCO seat he didn't get, adding it was about that representation.

McEachron agreed. He explained that unlike in places like San Bernardino, there's large areas in the High Desert in which Victorville, Hesperia and Apple Valley can expand, adding that representation on LAFCO would've been beneficial in that regard.

He reiterated Cox's statement, however, that Victorville has no plans to annex Oro Grande.

Cox said he would have to "let the dust settle" from the fallout before he'd be ready to discuss the situation with other cities; however, despite the outrage, Holland looked toward a future involving a reunited High Desert, albeit pointedly.

"(Victorville's) chosen to be the odd man out," he said. "Come back to the fold, prodigal child, when you're ready."

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By [Mike Lamb](#)

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Hinkley Post Office agreement reached

SAN BERNARDINO — San Bernardino County finalized a five-year agreement with the U.S. Postal Service and the Hinkley Community Center to establish a post office, according to 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood.

The new post office will be located inside the center at 35997 Mountain View Road and will replace the previous office located on Hinkley Road that closed a year ago. The old post office was located on property that was sold to Pacific Gas & Electric. Rural delivery of mail continued in the interim, but postal customers have had to travel to the Barstow Post Office, 12 miles away, for other postal services.

“This is welcome news for the residents of Hinkley,” Lovingood said. “Since the post office closed last year, it’s been an inconvenience for local residents. But this corrects all that.”

A public community meeting was held on June 3, 2015, to discuss the proposed relocation of the Hinkley Post Office. It was requested for County Service Area 70 W to consider relocating the Hinkley Post Office to the Community Center.

The Community Center is approximately 3,180 square feet. Construction of the Community Center was completed on March 27, 1996, and it is located on approximately 2.5 acres of CSA 70 W-owned land. It has two large meeting rooms, an office, a commercial kitchen, restrooms and storage areas.

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<http://www.desertdispatch.com/article/20160506/NEWS/160509921>

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Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailybulletin.com>)

Understanding the consequences of the Upland medical marijuana case

By Liset Márquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Sunday, May 8, 2016

UPLAND >> The city was ready to cut its losses.

After more than a year of costly legal battles, a [Fourth District Appellate Court](#) last month in unprecedented move ruled the city had no legal standing to deny the [California Cannabis Coalition](#) the right to hold a special election on a ballot measure that aimed to overturn Upland's [ban on medical marijuana dispensaries](#).

Upland has spent \$45,884 on the case so far but may be on the hook for another \$100,000 or so to pay for the coalition's legal fees. And it would cost \$137,000 to put on a special election.

"The council had felt it had invested too much in this case and was ready to cut its losses and accept defeat," said Timothy Bittle, the director of legal affairs for the Howard Jarvis Association.

After the appellate court ruling, the association reached out to Upland City Attorney Richard Adams about filing an amicus, or "friend of the court," brief to support Upland. That's when Bittle learned city officials were about to wave the white flag. So the organization more known for challenging cities decided to represent one. For free.

"It's unusual for us," he acknowledged in a phone conversation from his Sacramento office.

While the battle between Upland and the coalition dates back to 2014, Bittle said the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association had paid little attention until recently.

"It was a matter of local concern, and we didn't feel we needed to get involved," he said.

The taxpayers' advocacy group does, after all, only have two lawyers on staff who, at any given point, are working on half-dozen cases and 10 amicus briefs as well as monitoring any pending legislation it is sponsoring.

But Upland's ruling from the court of appeals changed everything. Because the decision is published, meaning it can be used as precedent in future cases, it may allow for future [tax increases through special elections](#), which often don't attract enough voters to represent the true voice of the people.

That was enough for the [Howard Jarvis Association](#).

"They're worried that our case in Upland will open the floodgates to raising taxes in the state," said attorney Roger Jon Diamond, who is representing the coalition.

In a petition filed last week, the association's legal arm asked the state Supreme Court to review an

appellate court ruling, claiming the decision has created a loophole that could circumvent the public's right to vote on new taxes.

“Even though the California Constitution requires an election, that requirement does not apply to taxes proposed by initiatives, according to the Court of Appeal,” the association's filing stated.

Bittle argues it's essential for any proposed tax increases to go on a general election ballot, not only because it's in the state Constitution, but for transparency reasons.

“If a voter initiative appears on the same ballot as a general election, it forces candidates to take a position on the tax and that way voters knows where they stand,” he said.

In this case, Upland was trying to defend the taxpayers, Bittle said. Upland opted to place the initiative in the [next general election](#) — this November — because elected officials believed the \$75,000 in fees dispensaries would have to pay were a tax.

San Diego publications [have questioned](#) whether the Chargers would be able to use this ruling to pass an initiative that could fund a new stadium, avoiding the two-thirds voter requirement.

Diamond, however, said he has never conceded the \$75,000 fee was a tax.

“Therefore, this whole discussion could be avoided,” he said. “The city of Upland could have avoided it, but they chose to pick a fight, and they got burned.”

The Santa Monica-based lawyer, however, believes the \$75,000 fee written in the ballot was a move to protect the taxpayers.

“If (the initiative) was just blank, without requiring they pay a fee, then every taxpayer would say they wouldn't want to impose a cost to the city, possibly created by the dispensaries that they're not paying for,” Diamond said.

While the ruling is creating a dialogue across the state about the implications, the League of California Cities is not getting involved in the petition for review, said Patrick Whitnell, general counsel for the organization.

Whitnell said if the Supreme Court decided to review the case, then the League's legal team will bring the issue back to its amicus committee and “see what their recommendation is.”

In his discussions with other cities, Whitnell said he hasn't heard of any jurisdiction that is interested in pursuing such a tax increase.

“It hasn't risen to our level,” he said.

URL: <http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20160508/understanding-the-consequences-of-the-upland-medical-marijuana-a-case>

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MARIJUANA: California aims to revamp how it regulates medical pot industry

By [BROOKE EDWARDS STAGGS](#)

2016-05-08 18:08:01



California blazed a trail to legalize medical marijuana 20 years ago. But the Golden State is only now confronting the full complexity of regulating consumer safety and business practices in an industry that has ballooned to an estimated \$2.7 billion annually.

It's no simple task, requiring startup-like coordination and enforcement across a dozen state agencies looking to rein in a sector of the economy that has thrived in a decidedly spotty patchwork of local oversight.

California's lack of control over the industry thus far has not gone unnoticed, according to John Hudak, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who focuses on marijuana policies.

"The state's medical marijuana program is in many ways the laughingstock of marijuana policies in the United States," Hudak said. "It's a significant example of everything that can go wrong, serving in many ways as a proxy system for recreational marijuana."

One measure of the challenge ahead? The state is expecting tens of thousands of cannabis businesses – from growers to distributors, testing labs to retail shops – to begin seeking one or more of 17 types of licenses starting Jan. 1, 2018.

And the regulatory challenges for the new system could skyrocket if voters approve the recreational use of pot later this year.

Three agencies will actually issue licenses. Nine more have been charged with various oversight and review responsibilities.

That includes the Medical Board, which must step up procedures to investigate and discipline doctors who aren't adhering to ethical standards in recommending marijuana for patients. The Department of Justice will conduct background checks on all licensees. And the Board of Equalization will issue seller permits to all retailers, oversee tax collections and help develop a system to trace the movement of all cannabis products.

"It's absolutely a positive development in that the state is finally doing something which should have been done after (medical marijuana use) got passed in 1996," said medical marijuana activist Lanny Swerdlow of Whitewater. "The regulations they have established are unfair. They're complex. They're expensive.

"But they're workable."

Larry Gaines, chairman of Cal State San Bernardino's criminal justice department, said he believes the state's overdue regulatory effort derives from the realization that legalizing recreational use of marijuana is around the corner.

The Marijuana Policy Project of California is seeking to get a voter initiative on the November ballot asking the electorate to legalize recreational use.

“I think the next time we put it on the ballot, it will probably pass,” he said. “The state’s really looking at this and saying ... we’ve got to have some kind of control over it. I think this (act) is a good first step. ... We’ll wait to see what problems crop up and deal with it.”

AGENCIES THAT BENEFIT

The departments that stand to gain the most employees and biggest boost to their budgets in the coming fiscal year are the Department of Fish and Game and the State Water Resources Control Board. Each agency will get more than 30 new positions to help mitigate impacts marijuana cultivation has on the state’s waterways.

All told, the state expects to add 126 jobs and spend \$24.6 million on the new regulatory effort in the coming year alone.

Overseeing the process is the new Bureau of Medical Marijuana Regulation, created within the Department of Consumer Affairs. The BMMR – referred to as “Bummer” by some in the industry – will regulate all transportation, distribution and sales under the direction of Lori Ajax.

Ajax said she’s been meeting at least weekly with other agencies involved in the new regulations. Leaders from each department also have been consulting other states that have more robust policies in place to regulate both medical and recreational marijuana.

There are “nuances” to launching programs involving multiple agencies, Ajax said. But so far, the process has gone smoothly.

“Everyone is just on board to meeting” the 2018 deadline to begin issuing licenses, Ajax said.

Here’s a look at how several key state agencies are gearing up for the task.

CULTIVATING NEW WAY OF BUSINESS

There are an estimated 50,000 cannabis cultivators in California, and thousands of them are expected to apply for growing licenses under new regulations enforced by the Department of Food and Agriculture, according to agency spokesman Jay Van Rein.

Several Inland cities, including Desert Hot Springs in Riverside County and Adelanto in San Bernardino County, recently have approved allowing commercial growing operations.

Cultivation licenses range from allowing outdoor grows under 5,000 square feet up to 20,000-square-foot warehouses. The department is charged with setting limits on the number of grow sites larger than 10,000 square feet.

Amber Morris, who spent the past decade overseeing plant health and pest prevention services, was named chief of the department’s new Medical Cannabis Cultivation Program. Van Rein said officials are in the early stages of drafting rules for cultivators.

Unlike with other types of agriculture his department regulates, Van Rein noted, the cannabis law calls for criminal background checks on applicants. It also requires the department to create a “track and trace” program that allows authorities to follow cannabis plants through the distribution chain, from their growing plots to their purchase by customers.

“Although the ‘track and trace’ requirement is complex, it is helpful that other states have gone before us,” Van Rein said, alluding to enforcement programs in states that have legalized recreational pot, such as Colorado and Washington.

TESTING FOR SAFETY

Businesses producing edibles, concentrates and other marijuana products also will have to answer to the state Department of Public Health.

The department is hiring additional staff to oversee manufacturing and laboratory testing of pot products, according to Miren Klein, assistant deputy director for the department’s Center for Environmental Health.

Under the new system, all marijuana products must be sent to a licensed lab for testing before they can be sold to consumers. Labs will check marijuana flowers for pesticides, mold and other contaminants, along with how

potent they are. Extracts will be tested for concentration and purity.

Currently, Klein said medical cannabis testing labs are approved by their local city or county. Under the new law, they'll have to obtain state licenses. And she expects many more labs to open in anticipation of the spike in demand for testing.

Along with a license for labs, Klein's department will issue two types of licenses for manufacturers. One will be for companies that use nonvolatile chemicals to extract cannabis from plants in concentrated oils. The other is for companies that use potentially explosive chemicals such as butane in the extraction process.

The regulations call for a limit on the number of licenses for companies using volatile substances. That cap is being worked out, Klein said.

Officials are in the early stages of developing regulations on the methods that labs will be required to use, assessing how much it will cost to license those labs and creating guidelines for regular audits to ensure they're following protocols.

Cannabis is a new oversight area for her agency, but Klein said her department "is quite knowledgeable regarding the handling and storage of food that dovetails with this new commodity."

KEEPING PESTICIDES IN CHECK

For now, there are no clear standards for the types and amounts of pesticides that can be present in medical marijuana.

The Department of Pesticide Regulation expects to begin by hiring three scientists to analyze chemical studies and help determine what levels are safe for the public, according to department spokeswoman Charlotte Fadipe.

The department has shared general rules about pesticide use with growers, she said. But because federal law doesn't allow for marijuana cultivation, Fadipe pointed out there are no pesticides specifically registered for use on marijuana.

At this point, she said it's not clear how many cultivators are using pesticides safely or whether major changes in cultivation practices are needed.

"We are relying on anecdotal information and reports from other states at this point," Fadipe said.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

There are a lot of unknowns about how the new state regulations will work. At least six follow-up bills are pending in the Legislature, covering everything from a training program for industry employees to substituting the word "cannabis" for "marijuana" in the law.

One ongoing and contentious regulatory issue is whether the cannabis distributor system should be modeled on the state's system for the alcohol industry, where beverage makers have to turn their products over to a third party to transport and sell them to stores.

Distributors are needed in a state as large as California, said David Weidenbach, who runs the packaging company Collective Supply and helped draft the new state oversight law as a board member with the California Cannabis Industry Association. But he also said many industry insiders are worried the state will be too restrictive when it comes to distributors, making it more difficult and costly to move products to customers.

Overall, Weidenbach said he considers the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act "a major victory" for California's cannabis industry.

It's a start "that was desperately needed," he said – especially considering voters approved the sale of medical marijuana in 1996. "There has been virtually zero progression since," he said.

Staff writer Michael J. Williams contributed to this report.

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Ninth Circuit reverses ruling in San Bernardino County corruption case

By Joe Nelson, The Sun

Friday, May 6, 2016



The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday reversed a lower court's order in San Bernardino County's Colonies corruption case, in which a defense attorney is [challenging evidence seized by the FBI](#) in 2011.

In the four-page ruling, a three-judge panel concluded that U.S. District Court Judge S. James Otero abused his discretion when he declined to hold an evidentiary hearing at the request of Upland defense attorney Stephen G. Larson, who is representing Rancho Cucamonga developer and defendant Jeff Burum.

Burum and three former top county officials stand accused of conspiring to fix a \$102 million settlement in November 2006 between the county and Burum's Rancho Cucamonga investor group, Colonies Partners LP, in exchange for bribes. Also charged in the case are former San Bernardino County Supervisor Paul Biane, former Assistant Assessor Jim Erwin and Mark Kirk, former chief of staff for former county Supervisor Gary Ovitt.

All four defendants have maintained their innocence since a grand jury [indicted](#) them in May 2011.

When prosecutors declined to file federal charges in May 2012 for undisclosed reasons, they handed over the evidence they gathered to state prosecutors. The San Bernardino County District Attorney's and state Attorney General's offices are jointly prosecuting the criminal case at the state level.

It's this evidence Burum wants to challenge at an evidentiary hearing.

In its Friday decision, the Ninth Circuit remanded the case back to Otero's courtroom for an evidentiary hearing, where it will be determined which evidence seized by the FBI can be used by state prosecutors, falls within the scope of the search warrants, is bound by the attorney-client privilege and which evidence needs to be returned to Burum or destroyed.

District Attorney spokesman Christopher Lee declined to comment Friday, citing the pending litigation.

"The impact of this ruling could fundamentally taint the state's case. It's the latest example that prosecutors and investigators pursued a case without regard to the law and, more importantly, Mr. Burum's innocence. It's time to end this," Larson said in a statement Friday.

Burum is challenging the September 2011 FBI raid at his Rancho Cucamonga home and office, arguing in court motions the warrants were overly broad and stale because the investigation stemmed from alleged crimes that occurred more than five years prior to the serving of the search warrants.

During the [April 7 hearing](#) before the Ninth Circuit panel in Pasadena, Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Widman told the judges that the factual disputes in the matter did not rise to the level of an evidentiary hearing. He said the government did not destroy electronic and hard copy records deemed irrelevant in the federal investigation because state prosecutors may find the evidence relevant in the criminal case pending in San Bernardino Superior Court.

Colonies Partners was awarded the \$102 million settlement to end a nearly five-year-old legal battle over who was responsible for paying for flood control improvements at Colonies Partners' 434-acre residential and commercial development in Upland, Colonies at San Antonio and Colonies Crossroads, respectively.

Prosecutors allege Biane, Erwin, Kirk and former Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus each took \$100,000 bribes from Burum, disguised as contributions to phony political action committees controlled by the defendants, in exchange for facilitating the settlement in Colonies' favor.

In March 2011, Postmus, per a plea agreement with prosecutors, [pleaded guilty](#) to 10 felonies in connection with the Colonies scandal and a companion corruption case in which he was accused of abusing his power as county assessor for political gain. The following month, he testified before the grand jury in the Colonies case, and is a key witness for the prosecution.

But defense attorneys maintain Postmus is not a credible witness, citing his admitted addiction to methamphetamine and alleging his testimony to the grand jury, the FBI and district attorney investigators has been inconsistent and unreliable.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article has been edited to correct which attorneys believe Postmus is not a credible witness.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/government-and-politics/20160506/ninth-circuit-reverses-ruling-in-san-bernardino-county-corruption-case>

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Courthouse News Service



Friday, May 06, 2016 Last Update: 6:18 PM PT

Plan to Reallocate Judgeships Moves Ahead

By MARIA DINZEO

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(CN) - The Judicial Council's committee on legislation voted Thursday to throw its support behind a controversial law that would allow the council to move five vacant judgeships from one county to another.

The committee had [delayed](#) the vote for a week, reconvening with new language it hoped would assuage concerns from the state's presiding judges who questioned encoding the council's authority to reallocate judgeships, especially in such broad terms.

"It's safe to say that the presiding judges statewide are divided on this issue," said Presiding Judge Brian McCabe of Merced County, who represents the state's 58 presiding judges as chair of the council's Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee. He told the legislation committee that he had polled the state's presiding judges and received some "very vehement" opposition to the idea. "There are a number of competing interests and concerns," he said. "The concern is this is a new arena we are stepping into, unprecedented, and it has people nervous."

The controversy stems from Gov. Jerry Brown's plan in his 2016-17 budget package to move five vacant judicial positions. Brown said "this will shift judgeships where the workload is highest without needing to increase the overall number of judges."

Brown has been emphatic that these vacant judgeships need to be moved before he will agree to fund any new positions.

The understanding is that this will involve taking two open positions from Alameda County and three from Santa Clara County, and giving two to Riverside County, two to San Bernardino County and one to Kern County. All three south-state counties are in serious need, though nearly all judges agree that with the state down by about 270 positions every court is in desperate need of more judges.

The original language included the sentence "Vacant judgeships shall be allocated in accordance with methodology and criteria established by the Judicial Council." That criteria, according to a [report](#) circulated by the council's legislation committee, says the council will allocate the positions based on a court's assessed need. A court assessed as "over-judged," i.e. having too many open slots, would then be forced to give up any number of those vacancies to a court assessed as "under-judged."

In an interview Judge David Lampe of Kern County, a director of the judges group Alliance for California Judges, said the proposal is unconstitutional.

"The Legislature can't just delegate to the Judicial Council its constitutional responsibility anymore than they can say the Judicial Council can set the tax rates for the state of California," he said, pointing to Article 6, Section 4 of the California Constitution, which says, "The Legislature shall prescribe the number of judges and provide for the officers and employees of each superior court."

He said the Alliance would support the council making a recommendation to the Legislature on the issue, but that the council should not be shifting vacant judgeships around.

"When you're proposing to take judges from one court and reallocate them to another, there's a host of issues with that, and the communities that are affected need the opportunity to be able to go to the Legislature on that," Lampe said.

The California Judges Association also issued a statement saying it was concerned about many aspects of the proposal, including that courts assessed as having too many open judgeships could lose funding.

"CJA is concerned that the proposal, which is different than the governor's initial proposal, does not limit the number of vacancies that could be reallocated. It also did not ensure that there would be adequate funding for the transferred positions and does not assure that the impacted courts have a say in any decision to remove a judicial seat from a community," Presiding Judge Gary Paden of Tulare County and acting CJA president said.

"Before we take a position on anything we want to know exactly what's going to come down and at this point, there are too many uncertainties," he said.

The CJA's two-page letter contains an additional worry over "the multiple unintended consequences that may be realized with the transfer of judicial positions" between counties.

"For example, the loss of judicial positions may lead to more sitting judges being challenged by those that would have otherwise run for election for one of the eliminated vacant seats, further politicizing and destabilizing the judiciary."

At Thursday's meeting the Judicial Council's lobbying staff presented a new option: to give the council authority only to reallocate up to five vacancies, and to allow for public comment on the council's methodology.

The lobbyists said the council will continue discussions with the legislative and executive branches about the judicial branch's need for additional judgeships, and offered tentative language about working "vigorously with the Legislature and Brown's office to come up with a more permanent solution to the judge shortage."

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Monday, May 09, 2016 Last Update: 8:00 AM PT

City Can't Bar Ex-Cons, Nonprofit Says

By PHILIP A. JANQUART

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RIVERSIDE, Calif. (CN) — Californians in the high desert town of Hesperia don't want ex-cons living there and passed unconstitutional ordinances to keep them out, a nonprofit claims in a federal class action.

The Victor Valley Family Resource Center (VVFRC) operates three group homes, also known as halfway houses, in Hesperia, a city of 92,000 in the Mojave Desert, 35 miles north of San Bernardino.

The group is "dedicated to reducing homelessness and recidivism by providing homeless and previously incarcerated individuals with the skills, resources, and supports they need to successfully reintegrate into the community," it says in its May 4 federal lawsuit.

"Although VVFRC offers housing and supportive services for up to one year, its clients generally transition to permanent housing within six to nine months," according to its 34-page complaint.

"There have been no substantive complaints from neighbors regarding those homes or its residents. The homes look no different than any other home in the neighborhood," the group says.

The homes, which have on-site staff and are closely monitored by parole officers, are a "critical component" of California's overhaul of its criminal justice system, plagued by unconstitutional overcrowding of prisons, the group says. The overhaul is meant to focus on rehabilitation and prevention.

But Hesperia passed two unconstitutional ordinances to keep people out, the Resource Center says. Its Group Home Ordinance of 2007 was followed by a Rental Housing Ordinance in 2015.

The Group Home Ordinance prohibits group homes from housing two or more people who are on probation.

Under the Rental Housing Ordinance, landlords must hand over tenants' personal information to the Hesperia Police Department, which conducts background checks and uploads the information to a city database administered by police. Police provide notice if a tenant engages in criminal activity, which triggers eviction proceedings, giving the landlord 10 days to kick the offending tenant out.

Victor Valley, its CEO Sharon Green and six group home residents sued the City of Hesperia, San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon and Hesperia Code Enforcement Officer Ernesto Montes, alleging violations of state and federal law, including the First, Fourth and 14th Amendments.

"Defendants continue to engage in policies and practices that limit the housing options for persons on probation, prohibit transitional supportive housing, and incite landlords to evict tenants like plaintiff VVFRC and its clients," the complaint states. "By doing so, defendants not only violate plaintiffs' constitutional and statutory rights, but also compromise public safety, increase homelessness and deprive the region of successful integrative and supportive services that make all Hesperia residents safer."

Hesperia residents claim the probationers endanger the community and harm property values.

"Defendants fear that state criminal justice reforms, such as California's Public Safety Realignment Act and the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act will cause an influx of people with criminal records to move into Hesperia, threatening their preferred 'demographic' for the city," the complaint states. "Rather than participate in statewide efforts to safely reintegrate individuals with criminal records into the community, defendants have enacted and enforced municipal ordinances designed to exclude such individuals from housing in the city."

Hesperia's public information officer, Rachel Molina, said the city could not comment on the lawsuit.

"I am aware of the lawsuit, but we just got served today," she said. "We have not been able to review the lawsuit, so we won't be able to answer any questions."

The plaintiffs' attorney, Adrienne Wong with the ACLU in San Bernardino, did not return a phone call seeking comment Friday. Nor did ACLU spokeswoman Sandra Hernandez.

The Resource Center asks the court to permanently enjoin the defendants from enforcing the two ordinances, plus costs and attorneys' fees.

Hesperia, 3,186 feet high in the desert, is 49 percent Latino and 41 percent white, according to city-data.com. Its median household income of \$42,990 was 29 percent below the statewide median of \$60,190 in 2013. The median value of a home or condo that year was \$149,200, 60 percent below the statewide median, according to city-data.



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By [Rene Ray De La Cruz](#)[Print Page](#)

May 07, 2016 10:15AM

ACLU lawsuit challenges City of Hesperia, Sheriff's Department

HESPERIA — The ACLU Foundation of Southern California has filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the Victor Valley Family Resource Center against the city of Hesperia and San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon.

The nonprofit VVFC, which is led by founder and CEO Sharon Green, is challenging Hesperia's attempts to "unlawfully restrict" housing and support services for "individuals with criminal records," according to an ACLU SoCal news release.

The Hesperia-based resource center connects individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to transitional supportive housing. The suit argues that efforts by the city to shut down three transitional homes are intended to "banish residents released on probation."

"VVFC attempted to resolve this matter on several occasions" with the city and the Sheriff's Department "without going to the extent (of filing a lawsuit)," Green told the Daily Press. "Unfortunately, they left us no alternative but to have a lawsuit filed."

The lawsuit "argues that several Hesperia municipal codes which were used to target VVFC violate both the California and U.S. Constitutions," the ACLU said.

"The city's efforts to shutter these homes is little more than an attempt to banish individuals with criminal records from their community," said Adrienna Wong, a staff attorney with the ACLU. "That's unacceptable and violates the California Constitution and the First and 14th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution."

Several VVFC clients are named as plaintiffs in the suit and a city code enforcement officer is named as an additional defendant.

Green, who is also a pastor, serves on three county-based agency boards, including chair of Homeless Provider/Partnership Network, member on the Interagency Council on Homelessness and member of the Reentry Collaborative Board.

Sheriff's Department spokeswoman Jodi Miller and Hesperia spokeswoman Rachel Molina told the Daily Press their agencies could not comment on the lawsuit as they had not yet been served.

According to the ACLU letter, the county's Probation Department currently refers individuals to the VVFC when they have no place to go. These individuals are sent to the resource center, which provides transitional housing for up to one year, as well as meals, case management services, and permanent housing placement.

"In some cases, Hesperia enforced a code prohibiting residential structures that house more than one individual on probation who are not related by blood or marriage, violating the individual plaintiffs' right to association," the ACLU letter said. "One of VVFC's transitional homes was forced to close as a result, and the remaining homes may face the same fate."

Last year, Hesperia Director of Development Scott Priester told the City Council the group home in the 7800 block of Chase Avenue had been vacated earlier that day after code enforcement took action on the house operated by the Victor Valley Family Resource Center and Green.

According to Priester, there were building and safety issues with the home and Molina told the Daily Press that Green chose to comply with the city by closing the facility rather than seeking to keep it open through a conditional use permit.

Last year, Green told the Daily Press that she moved her eight clients out of the Chase Avenue home for their "safety and stability" after neighbors "intimidated them and kept knocking on our door" at all hours of the day. She also shared several stories of success, including one man in his 40s who'd been on drugs since he was 9 years old and had just completed drug rehabilitation and was getting his life back together.

Green said the Chase Avenue home, which is now closed, is one of the homes referenced in the lawsuit.

The ACLU letter also alleges Hesperia "violated privacy rights by enacting an ordinance requiring landlords to provide their tenants' personal information to the police in Hesperia for purposes of a background check and registration of tenants in a database administered by the police."

Under the same ordinance, the city requires landlords to evict tenants if the chief of police sends a "notice of criminal activity" — even if the tenants are never convicted, charged, or even arrested for any crime, the ACLU letter said.

Hesperia's efforts to shut down or severely limit the operations of VVFC are a direct challenge to the state Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109), the sweeping reform package enacted to ease severe overcrowding in California's jails and prisons, the ACLU said. AB 109 redirects state resources from building more prisons to investing in community-based programs that provide services such as transitional housing, addiction treatment, mental health counseling, job placement and more.

"The city's stance is not only unlawful but it also undermines public safety by eliminating the kind of re-entry and sober living group homes that provide crucial services to individuals who have no other recourse," said Belinda Escobosa Helzer, ACLU SoCal general counsel and director of its Dignity for All Project.

In October, the City Council approved the Crime Free Rental Housing Program that would hold tenants and owners accountable for renters' actions on their

properties, and would give law enforcement officials and landlords more enforcement power over "poor renters" who cause problems, according to former Capt. Nils Bentsen of the Hesperia Sheriff's Station.

The rental program requires all tenants to be screened through the Sheriff's Department crime-free program and through a separate criminal background check. Owners and property managers will be notified if a prospective tenant has been in violation of the "Crime Free Lease Addendum" anywhere in the county. The decision to rent to a tenant will be decided solely by the property owner.

Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227, RDeLaCruz@VVDailyPress.com or on Twitter @DP_ReneDeLaCruz.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/article/20160507/NEWS/160509770>

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SAN BERNARDINO SHOOTING: Union unveils memorial plans for victims

By [ALEJANDRA MOLINA](#)

2016-05-06 16:18:52



A fountain and memorial garden in front of the Service Employees International Union regional office in Riverside will honor the victims of the Dec. 2 San Bernardino attack.

The memorial will be a semicircle and will include a walkway surrounded by 14 fountain jets. A waterfall will cascade over each of the names of the 14 victims who were killed in the shooting.

All 14 waterfalls will pour into a pool, and every 30 seconds one of the 14 fountains will go off. This will repeat every 10 to 15 minutes.

A pedestal will include a list of those who died in the attack, as well as the names of the people who were injured. A plaque will include donor recognition.

Eleven of the 14 victims killed were members of the Service Employees International Union. Most of them were environmental health specialists for San Bernardino County.

Tim Maloney of Riverside-based Community Works Design Group unveiled the memorial's design Friday at the SEIU Local 721 open house gathering in Riverside.

To Sandra Mendoza, whose husband, Juan, was killed in the attack, the memorial is a way for the community to remember his strength.

Mendoza, who attended the gathering, said she's heard stories of how her husband tried to stop the shooter inside the Inland Regional Center.

"He's always trying to protect people, till the end he tried to protect them," Mendoza said. "We, his family, have to suffer with the decision he made, but we don't see him doing anything other than that."

A groundbreaking for the memorial will be June 2, the 6-month anniversary of the attack.

Also Friday, Hal Houser, a lead environmental health specialist who was inside the Inland Regional Center during the shooting, honored the victims' family members with a memorial plaque.

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REDLANDS: Redlands Bowl gets additional patrols

By [SANDRA EMERSON](#)

2016-05-06 18:59:23



Attendees of this year's Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival may be relieved to know that two Redlands police sergeants will be present during each performance.

The Redlands Community Music Association has requested the additional police presence to ease the minds of the public, which has been asking about bowl security since the Dec. 2 terrorist attack in San Bernardino.

"We've had a number of phone calls almost on a daily basis asking us how we intend to protect the public in the summer," Executive Director Beverly Noerr told the City Council on Tuesday. "We really do want to

make sure that the public and everyone who always enjoys the bowl continue to do so."

The council, with Councilman Paul Barich abstaining, on Tuesday voted to waive the \$12,480 it would cost to staff the sergeants for three hours per concert. There will be 20 concerts.

"We serve over 100,000 people with performing arts free of admittance every single year and over 1,000 people who support the festival logistically every year," Noerr said. "Financially, we raise funds to provide for the artists' costs and all the running of the festival, which is very expensive. The city of Redlands and our wonderful donors support this, but we want to keep them safe."

An estimated 8 million people have attended a performance at the bowl since the festival's inception in 1924, according to the city staff report.

The attendance for this year's festival, which will run from June 24 through Aug. 19, is expected to be about 100,000 people from Redlands and surrounding areas, according to the staff report.

On Dec. 2, Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, killed 14 people and wounded 22 others during a shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino.

They rented a townhouse in Redlands, where authorities discovered pipe bombs, bomb-making materials and ammunition.

"It is our duty to bring world-class music to the Redlands Bowl, but we also feel it is our duty to make sure our attendees are safe, and this is one piece of the puzzle that this brings to the table," said Jan Hudson, association board president.

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U.S. trial delayed for man accused of buying guns used by San Bernardino shooters

Source: Reuters - Sat, 7 May 2016 12:25 AM

Author: Reuters



May 6 (Reuters) - The trial for a man accused of purchasing the assault-style rifles used by a married couple to massacre 14 people in San Bernardino, California last year has been postponed until March, a judge ruled Friday.

Enrique Martinez was a childhood friend of shooter Syed Rizwan Farook and allegedly planned an attack with him in 2012 that was never carried out. Citing the complexity of the case against Martinez, U.S. District Judge Jesus Bernal in Riverside, California, moved Martinez' trial date from July 19 to March 21, 2017, court papers show.

Marquez was arrested in December for his role in allegedly purchasing the guns used by Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 29, in their Dec. 2 attack on a holiday party attended by Farook's co-workers.

Their assault, which came a few weeks after Islamic State gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in a series of coordinated attacks around Paris, has raised anxiety about violence throughout the United States and changed the tone of the race for the White House to include an emphasis on national security issues.

Farook and Malik died in a shootout with police the day of the attack. Marquez, then 24, was arrested two weeks later, and was indicted for conspiracy and giving false information when purchasing firearms. He was also charged with violating immigration laws by entering into a sham marriage with a relative of Farook.

In court, his public defenders have argued that Marquez was only 19 when he bought explosives and rifles later used by Malik and Farook and had not participated in their Islamic State-inspired attack at a party of San Bernardino county public health workers.

(Reporting by Sharon Bernstein in Sacramento, California; Editing by Cynthia Osterman)

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailybulletin.com>)

Islamophobia prompts Pomona group to start dialogue to create a more united, peaceful community

By Monica Rodriguez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Sunday, May 8, 2016

POMONA >> The Dec. 2 terrorist attacks in San Bernardino and in other parts of the world have made some people fear members of the Muslim faith, said a Pomona activist.

Those same attacks have made Muslims fearful that their non-Muslim neighbors, classmates and colleagues at work will think of they are terrorists when they, like the community at-large, simply wish to live in peace.

To break down barriers and build relationships, the [NAACP Pomona Valley branch](#), in collaboration with area faith leaders, will host a community dialogue from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday at the Village Conference Center, 1460 E. Holt Ave. The center is accessed via Entrance No. 1.

“By building a community, we all feel safe and we can rally around those who don’t feel safe,” said Jeannette Ellis-Royston, president of the NAACP Pomona Valley branch.

Cases of terrorism, such as the one in which Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 29, of Redlands fatally shot 14 people and wounded 22 others at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino Dec. 2, [frightened people](#) and created distrust, she said.

Events such as the [Easter Sunday terrorist bombing](#) in a Pakistani park that left more than 60 dead and hundreds wounded, many of them Christian, only work to further unsettle people.

But those fears can be addressed by getting to know each other and allowing people of different faiths, ages, ethnic backgrounds and lifestyles to see “we are more alike than we are unlike,” Ellis-Royston said. “If we want to continue to live as neighbor,s we have to come together.”

The dialogue will include the participation of members of the clergy representing various faiths and ethnic groups along with members of the community who will take part in panel discussions and audience question-and-answer sessions, she said.

Among those taking part in the community dialogue will be Jose Calderon, professor emeritus of sociology and Chicano/a-Latino/a studies at Pitzer College.

Calderon said when communities face conflict or frustration, they will take it out on themselves or take it out on others, which can lead to violence.

By working collectively, communities can come up with ways to deal with frustration and conflict, he said.

“I think we need to have those types of discussions,” Calderon said.

Such conversation ensure “we do not blame on entire community for the actions of others,” he added.

Ellis-Royston said this community dialogue provides residents a platform to ask questions and have a greater understand of its Muslim neighbors.

The community dialog is intended to be the first of future community discussions, she said.

URL: <http://www.dailybulletin.com/social-affairs/20160508/islamophobia-prompts-pomona-group-to-start-dialogue-to-create-a-more-united-peaceful-community>

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

CAIR calls for investigation into yearbook misprint in which Muslim student was misidentified

Muslim student's photo appears over wrong name

By Doug Saunders, The Sun

Sunday, May 8, 2016



RANCHO CUCAMONGA >> The Council on American-Islamic Relations is calling for an investigation into an incident in which the wrong name was printed beneath a yearbook photo of a Muslim student at Los Osos High School.

Bayan Zehlif, a Muslim student who wears a hijab, found her photo in the school yearbook with the name of another student — Isis Phillips. Attorneys with CAIR's civil rights division are concerned the incident may be racially motivated.

“We join with the family in their concern about a possible bias motive for this incident and in the deep concern for their daughter's safety as a result of being falsely labeled as a member of a terrorist group,” said CAIR-LA Executive Director Hussam Ayloush. “No student should have to face the humiliation of being associated with a group as reprehensible as ISIS.”

Zehlif, who's set to graduate from Los Osos, took to social media to express her dismay.

“I am extremely saddened, disgusted, hurt and embarrassed that the Los Osos High School yearbook was able to get away with this. Apparently I am ‘Isis’ in the yearbook,” Zehlif posted on Facebook. “The school reached out to me and had the audacity to say that this was a typo. I beg to differ, let's be real.”

According to CAIR's statement, the student and her family were deeply embarrassed after seeing the picture in the yearbook and have suffered a great deal of emotional and psychological distress. It's unlikely that the student will return to school until the issue is resolved appropriately.

Mat Holton, Superintendent of the Chaffey Joint Unified School District, quickly responded to media inquiries.

“It was brought to the attention of LOHS administration late Friday, May 6, after yearbooks were distributed to 287 seniors, that a student was incorrectly identified as a different Los Osos student whose first name is Isis,” Holton said. “The families of both students have been contacted to offer a sincere apology and to assure them that a thorough investigation would be conducted.”

Zehlif and her family could not be reached for comment. The family is requesting that their daughter's privacy be respected and are asking that all media inquiries be directed to CAIR-LA, according to CAIR's statement.

Holton said no additional yearbooks will be distributed until the misprint is corrected. The school is also asking that any books already distributed be returned.

"The yearbook publisher has already been contacted and is working on a solution to remedy this unfortunate situation," Holton said. "If they find that a student acted irresponsibly and intentionally, administration will take appropriate actions."

School administrators said they want to assure students, staff and members of the community that this regrettable incident in no way represents the values, or beliefs of Los Osos High School.

"They have high expectations for student media and will continue to work diligently to ensure that all future student productions and publications are held to the highest possible standards," Holton said.

Staff Writer Beau Yarbrough contributed to this story.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160508/cair-calls-for-investigation-into-yearbook-misprint-in-which-muslim-student-was-misidentified>

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Clinics spread the word about health services at fair

By Leslie Shaw Hi-Desert Star | Posted: Friday, May 6, 2016 6:31 pm

YUCCA VALLEY — Bundled-up visitors braved a blustery day to enjoy an outdoor health fair held by Hi-Desert Family Health Clinics April 30.

The clinics, owned by the Morongo Basin Healthcare District, offered blood pressure and body mass index screenings.

Health and community outreach organizations shared information about their services to visitors, who were also invited to drop off their expired medicines and sharps.

The Marine Corps provided a military police mobile command post to explore.

Kids' activities including a fishing game, bean bag toss, mini basketball, a bounce house and costumed characters: Darin the Lion with the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program and Tooth and Toothpaste, buddies reminding kids about proper dental care.

A free hot dog lunch was served.

The Hi-Desert Family Health Clinic held the fair to promote community awareness about health services available in the Morongo Basin.

“Our clinics have a sliding-fee scale to serve the uninsured and the under-insured,” outreach specialist Sheree Fansler noted.

At another table, Carol Nemechek explained what San Bernardino County's long-term care ombudsman program does. “We visit nursing and resident care homes to make sure the care is good, the licensing is up-to-date and the administration is doing everything they should to take care of the residents,” she said.

Other participating organizations included the Community Emergency Response Team, Family Services Association, Kiwanis Club, Reach Out Morongo Basin, Transitional Age Youth Center, Unity Home, Hi-Desert Medical Center, Behavioral Health Services, Joshua Tree Tortoise Rescue,



Clinics spread the word about health services at fair

Carol Nemechek, left, is with the San Bernardino County Long Term Care Ombudsman and Carol Short is educating people on the You Are Not Alone program.

Morongo Basin Healthcare District Foundation, Yucca Valley Fire Department, Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Desert, Pacific Clinics, Center For Healthy Generations, Valley Star Community Services, Citizens on Patrol, Copper Mountain College Foundation and You Are Not Alone.

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailybulletin.com>)

White House taps Rancho Cucamonga as example of transparency with police data

By Liset Márquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Friday, May 6, 2016



RANCHO CUCAMONGA >> Well before President Barack Obama’s Police Task Force recommended making police activity data readily available to the public, this city was already providing that level of transparency for its residents.

Since April 2015 [Rancho Cucamonga](#)’s public safety online dashboard allows residents to view real-time updates, showing response time from the San Bernardino County sheriff’s substation and fire department.

After learning about Rancho Cucamonga’s [online dashboard](#), the White House invited a contingent from Rancho Cucamonga to contribute to the Police Data Initiative.

“We were already publishing this dashboard long before the police data initiative staff put their mission together. They reached out to us because we were already doing what they want other agencies to do,” said Capt. Danielle Boldt.

Cities participating in the initiative are asked to release three open datasets about policing activities over the coming months — response times, the number of crime incidents and the number of traffic incidents. But Boldt said Rancho Cucamonga already releases those figures almost as soon as they are available.

To improve transparency, the city’s [online dashboard includes interactive data](#), charts and maps, said Donna Finch, a management analyst in the City Manager’s Office. Data released as of March 2016 show the police department had an average response time of 3.8 minutes for emergency service calls; there were 3,483 crime incidents and 522 traffic incidents.

The one-day White House gathering April 22 allowed city officials to hear from other law enforcement agencies and cities about how they’re releasing data to the public. Rancho Cucamonga’s contingent included, Boldt, Finch and Darryl Polk, director of Innovation and Technology — all three have been involved in the city’s dashboard.

For Polk, getting to meet officials from larger cities was very educational, “as far as lessons learned from other agencies.”

“I partnered with Orlando, and Orlando has very different set of challenges that we have. Hearing those challenges and hearing how they met them was very valuable,” he said.

There were about 175 representatives from 53 cities in attendance. Only six cities were from California, including Rancho Cucamonga, the only San Bernardino County city.

By publishing these three datasets, Boldt said, it is a tool for her staff to refer the public to the answers for their questions.

“So the community can get some intelligible information and get make some decisions, and reach their own conclusions,” Polk said. “We have our conclusions, but the exciting thing about this is it allows the community to challenge it or support it or have a dialogue about it.”

When Rancho Cucamonga was developing its dashboard, Polk said the goal was provide the raw data to the audience.

“We wanted it to be unfiltered data from the law enforcement,” he said. “The trick to that is there is some filtering that has to take place to protect the anonymity of the citizens, to ensure we don’t violate any government codes or legal codes that restrict the distribution of the information.”

This is not the first time the White House has invited representatives from Rancho Cucamonga.

In 2015, first lady [Michelle Obama recognized cities](#), including Rancho Cucamonga, for participating in the Let’s Move! City’s, Towns and Counties initiative.

Two years before that, [Rancho Cucamonga’s Public Library](#) was honored with the 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

As part of the police initiative, Rancho Cucamonga’s representative will participate in regular conference calls to provide updates on their progress.

“From here, we’re going to continue to keep our fingers on the pulse, as what the community wants to see,” Boldt said. “I believe this community needs to know what level of service they’re receiving from the police staff ... They are a very integral part of our overall policing of this city. No law enforcement agency can police without the support of their community.”

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URL: <http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20160506/white-house-taps-rancho-cucamonga-as-example-of-transparency-with-police-data>

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Want to vote now? Here's the rundown on early voting in Southern California

By David Montero, San Bernardino County Sun

Sunday, May 8, 2016



Eager voters get their first crack at casting ballots today — as early as 7:30 a.m. in some Southern California counties — though enthusiasm among Republicans may be diminished now that Donald Trump is the presumptive nominee and faces no competition.

Los Angeles County Republican Party Chairman Mark Vafiades said he's worried about that.

“Now that it's pretty much a done deal, I'm afraid people won't come out and that will hurt the down-ticket races,”

Vafiades said. “I would hope people realize it's especially important because it affects all of those races: senate, state Senate, Assembly and even the supervisor's races.”

• Related Story: [LA County gears up for surge in June 7 primary voters](#)

Interest will likely continue to be high on the Democratic side, however, where [Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders continue to duel for delegates in California](#). In speeches last week, [Clinton urged supporters](#) to take advantage of early voting and the Bernie Sanders campaign had surrogates Rosario Dawson and Luiz Guzman pushing people to vote as soon as possible.

“Our campaign has already been on that and, as soon as early voting starts, our get-out-to-vote starts with the No. 1 goal being for people to get their ballots in,” Sanders spokeswoman Erika Andiola said.

And counties are making a variety of efforts to make it as effortless as possible, too.

Cecilia Gomez Reyes, spokeswoman for the Los Angeles County registrar-recorder/county clerk's office, said people have the option to drop off their mail-in ballots at 11 kiosks throughout the county. Those locations haven't been announced yet. She also said if you can't drop off your ballot, you can have someone sign your ballot with you, and they can drop it off.

Starting today, voters can drop off their ballots at county registrar offices in Norwalk, San Bernardino, Riverside and Santa Ana.

The registrar also will be open on the weekends on May 28-29 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and June 4-5 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Gomez Reyes said vote-by-mail accounts for 34.5 percent of the 4.8 million registered voters. The county began mailing out sample ballots with vote-by-mail applications April 28 and will continue to do so

through May 17.

She also said that just because early voting starts today, it doesn't mean it's too late to register to participate in the primary.

The deadline to register to vote or switch parties for the June 7 primary is May 23.

San Bernardino County registrar of voters spokeswoman Melissa Eickman said their doors would open at 7:30 a.m. for those wanting to vote early. She said most sample ballots and early voting applications will be hitting mailboxes by Saturday.

Of the county's more than 761,000 voters, 53.8 percent are early voters. Even though the county is vast and includes many isolated areas, only 5,000 of its registered voters are vote-by-mail exclusively because there are no polling places for them to vote at on the day of the primary.

Eickman said the office won't be open on Saturdays, however, until June 4 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

She said that for the first time, however, there will be two remote locations in Ontario and Victorville for voters to drop off ballots and the county will use an electronic sign at the Ontario Convention Center to direct voters where to go.

Riverside County also will have remote locations for early voters May 27-29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Candice Gordon, executive assistant to the registrar of voters, said they will have sites set up on those days at the Galleria at Tyler, The Promenade in Temecula and the Westfield Palm Desert.

She said 60 percent of the more than 881,000 voters are permanent vote-by-mail residents.

Orange County Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley said almost 65 percent of the 1.5 million registered voters are vote-by-mail residents and that participation has gone up 400 percent in the past 12 years. He said that for those who want to vote today, their office in Santa Ana will open at 8 a.m.

Kelley said, anecdotally, he has noticed a drop-off in vote-by-mail ballot requests since Trump became the sole candidate in the race to be the Republican presidential nominee.

Vote-by-mail has been a state law since 1961 and, according to state law, sending ballots must begin 29 days prior to election day.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/government-and-politics/20160508/want-to-vote-now-heres-the-rundown-on-early-voting-in-southern-california>

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A fashion 'do' for 2016: The 'I Voted' sticker

The oval affirmations are valued for their meaning and ability to convince others to cast ballots

By Jeff Horseman, The Press-Enterprise

Sunday, May 8, 2016



For many Inland voters, the reward for doing one's civic duty is best delivered adhesively.

Oval and emblazoned with the American flag, "I Voted" stickers have evolved from a simple thank you to an Election Day status symbol capable of boosting egos and cajoling others into casting a ballot.

"I believe wearing an 'I Voted' sticker is a badge of honor and a friendly reminder to those who haven't voted to go to the polls and vote," said Steve Ruth, a Democratic Party activist from Corona.

Inland elections officials will have thousands of stickers ready for California's June 7 primary, which could have an above-average turnout from voters excited about the Republican and Democratic presidential races.

"Polling place voters expect to get a sticker, and there may be voter frustration if this expectation is not met," said Melissa Eickman, spokeswoman for the San Bernardino County Elections Office of the Registrar of Voters.

Voters also can get a virtual sticker through Facebook. The social media website gives users the option of clicking a button to add an "I Voted" badge to their statuses.

The stickers took on another meaning during New York state's April primary. "I Voted" stickers covered the Rochester, New York, gravestone of Susan B. Anthony, who fought for a woman's right to vote in the 19th century.

Mail-in stickers

Riverside County also sends the stickers with ballots mailed to vote-by-mail voters. The practice started with the June 2015 mail-in election, said county Registrar of Voters Rebecca Spencer.

San Bernardino County doesn't include the stickers with mail-in ballots, but that might change. The county relies on a vendor to mail ballots, and whether stickers can be included depends on the cost and the vendor's ability to mail the stickers, Eickman said.

There's no timetable for deciding whether to include stickers with mail-in ballots, Eickman added.

Orange County gives the stickers to mail-in and polling-place voters. "It's probably the most requested thing that I get," said Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley, adding that the county will have about 800,000 stickers at polling places June 7.

This year marks the first time Los Angeles County will send stickers to mail-in voters. Before, they were given only to voters who cast ballots in person. The stickers' popularity led to the decision to include mail-in voters, said Cecilia Reyes, a spokeswoman for the registrar.

Businesses that want to encourage voting by giving something to sticker-bearers need to be careful. Federal law prohibits giving anything of value in exchange for proof of voting in an election for a federal office, said Sam Mahood, press secretary for California Secretary of State Alex Padilla.

It would be different if the primary didn't include races for Congress and the White House.

"State law prohibits anything of value being given to urge a voter to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate or measure," Mahood said. "But it is not illegal to give away items to people solely for voting in a local or state election where no federal candidates are on the ballot."

'I did my part'

Despite their popularity, the stickers haven't led to more voter participation in recent years. A record low 42 percent of voters turned out for the November 2014 general election. Turnout for the June 2014 primary was a mere 25 percent.

Political scientists said stickers can be a source of peer pressure. "(The stickers are) a public reminder that it is Election Day and someone voted," said Shaun Bowler, a UC Riverside political science professor.

"It may help prompt a couple of others to turn out and vote, but the sticker also is a public sign that someone voted — it's equivalent in some ways to the ribbons people wear for various causes or T-shirts for giving blood. It allows people a public expression of, 'I did my part.'"

The virtual sticker may have a bigger influence. According to the science journal "Nature," seeing the Facebook "I Voted" status button led another 340,000 to cast ballots in the 2010 congressional elections.

Melody Crowder-Meyer, assistant professor of politics at Sewanee: The University of the South in Tennessee, said the stickers factor into whether people decide to vote.

"When political scientists evaluate why an individual chooses to participate in politics, a key factor that many studies have found matters is the benefit that comes from feeling you've done your civic duty," she said, noting the time it takes voters to register, find their polling place and possibly stand in line to cast a ballot.

Even voters who have reasons to believe the system is rigged value the stickers, said Meg Mott, a professor of politics at Marlboro College in Vermont.

"It's as if the presence of all those stickers will restore ... democratic decision-making to the voting public, sustaining the illusion that the majority, not the party elites, ultimately decide," she said.



EDITORIAL: Doing more with fewer employees

2016-05-06 17:29:13

Riverside County is in a bind. This year, the Board of Supervisors has to juggle costly obligations to provide adequate medical services in county jails and construct and prepare to staff a new \$300 million jail in Indio, while negotiating contracts with several county unions and patching up its structural budget deficit.

Adding to these pressures is the seemingly neverending problem of rising pension costs.

On Tuesday, the board received and discussed the annual report of the county's Pension Advisory Review Committee. According to the report, the county's safety and miscellaneous pension funds are, respectively, funded at 74.2 percent and 76.9 percent. Additionally, pension costs are expected to grow by over \$170 million by fiscal year 2023-24.

While the county deserves credit for implementing pension reforms several years ago that are beginning to curb the long-term trajectory of the pension burden, the report notes the county will see substantially higher costs for years to come. Pension costs are expected to grow rapidly through fiscal year 2023-24 before peaking for a decade.

For the most part, with respect to the obligations already entered into, this is a trend that is unavoidable and must be dealt with. "Our options are limited because these benefits have been committed to," Paul McDonnell, county finance director, told the board. "There's nothing we can do at this point to substantially reduce the pension costs below what has already been done."

While reforms in the form of less-generous pension formulas, later retirement ages and requiring employees to actually contribute to their pensions have been implemented and will save money in the long run, there are still ways for the county to save money.

In particular, the county needs fewer county employees. While simple attrition is one way of accomplishing that, in the best interests of service delivery and taxpayers, it is time the county looked seriously at how it not only can streamline existing county departments but also identify opportunities for contracting out various functions to the private sector.

"If there are ways we can deliver the service that are less costly, that is what we need to do because providing these benefits is very expensive," Mr. McDonnell explained to the board.

Though this is sure to be unpopular with county employees and their unions, what matters most is ensuring taxpayers are getting effective services without spending more than needs to be spent.

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CAPITOL ALERT MAY 6, 2016 5:07 PM

Some California lobbyist employers cranked up spending this year

HIGHLIGHTS

Total lobbyist payments of \$74.3 million through March

Spent \$68.8 million during same time in 2014

SEIU, Western States Petroleum Association and others had big increases



BY JIM MILLER
jmiller@sacbee.com

Trade associations, unions and other lobbyist employers spent more than \$74.3 million during the first three months of 2016, recent state filings show, with some groups spending significantly more compared to the same period in the last legislative session.

The California State Council of Service Employees reported \$1.97 million in lobbying-related expenses during the fifth quarter of the 2015-16 session, \$600,000 more than what the SEIU umbrella union spent two years ago. The council spent \$615,000 more on “other payments to influence,” a catch-all category that covers advertising, rallies and other costs related to lobbying.

“SEIU has taken on bigger battles and is applying more resources to major campaigns on behalf of working men and women,” said Mike Roth, a spokesman for SEIU, which played an active role in the recently approved minimum wage legislation as well as efforts to increase overtime for home care workers and a ballot measure to raise tobacco taxes.

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SEARCH

Top-100 lobbyist employers January-March 2016

Lobbyist employer	Jan-March 2016 payments to influence	Change from Jan-March 2014
California Hospital Association/California Association Of Hospitals And Health Systems	\$805,380	\$89,888
eBay Inc.	\$602,250	\$576,450
Metropolitan Water District Of Southern California	\$354,751	\$75,631
California New Car Dealers Association	\$292,149	\$141,572

County Welfare Directors Association Of California	\$200,272	\$156,967
Civil Justice Association Of California	\$154,392	\$68,151
Resources Legacy Fund	\$150,787	\$102,787
San Manuel Band Of Mission Indians	\$106,675	\$45,316
CGI Technologies And Solutions Inc.	\$90,000	\$58,500
California Workforce Association	\$69,292	\$45,730
Altamed Health Services Corporation	\$65,000	\$35,000
California State Firefighters' Association	\$36,000	\$36,000

1 of 1

eBay, Inc. had the second-highest spending increase from two years ago, a change linked to its “activity expense” of \$600,000 for the StubHub Fan Fair before this year’s Super Bowl in Santa Clara. The eBay filing notes that an aide of Assemblyman Jim Cooper, D-Elk Grove, attended the fair.

The Western States Petroleum Association reported \$1.9 million in influence payments the first three months of the year, \$439,000 more than what the association spent during the same quarter in 2014. The change largely reflected an increase in how much the trade group spent on other payments to influence.

The group played a leading role last summer in opposing major environmental legislation championed by Gov. Jerry Brown and legislative leaders.

“In any given session as legislative activity increases, it requires an increased response and lobbying presence, therefore spending will increase,” Catherine Reheis-Boyd, the association’s president, said in a statement. “Due to the political attacks we saw last session, WSPA efforts to educate lawmakers and the public required increased activity.”

Other lobbyist employers who reported spending a lot more were the California School Boards Association, AT&T, Inc. and Sempra Energy, the San Diego-based parent company of Southern California Gas Co. The gas company owns the Aliso Canyon storage facility, where a gas leak prompted the introduction of multiple bills.

Overall, the top-10 lobbyist spenders during the first three months of 2016 were the California State Council of Service Employees, Western States Petroleum Association, California Hospital Association, Chevron Corp., California Chamber of Commerce, AT&T, Inc., Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, California Teachers Association, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., and eBay, Inc.

Total lobbying expenses during the period last year reached \$68.8 million.

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By CA Lottery



EDITORIAL: Lawmakers blowing smoke on vaping

2016-05-05 16:50:48

California state and local governments continue to try to crack down on e-cigarettes, or vaporizers, and regulate them like cigarettes, yet mounting data show that the devices are far safer to users – and those around them – and have been proven effective at providing smokers an alternative to help them quit or significantly reduce their tobacco smoking.

The latest evidence of this comes from the Royal College of Physicians, a respected British doctors' group that helps establish medical standards in the country, which touted e-cigarettes as an effective means of quitting smoking.

While “[t]here are concerns that e-cigarettes will increase tobacco smoking by renormalizing the act of smoking, acting as a gateway to smoking in young people and being used for temporary, not permanent, abstinence from smoking,” the report noted, “[t]o date, there is no evidence that any of these processes is occurring to any significant degree in the U.K. Rather, the available evidence to date indicates that e-cigarettes are being used almost exclusively as safer alternatives to smoked tobacco, by confirmed smokers who are trying to reduce harm to themselves or others from smoking, or to quit smoking completely.”

The report, further, asserted that the long-term health hazards of vaping are “unlikely to exceed 5 percent of the harm from smoking tobacco” – in line with a 2013 study that found that “the levels of potentially toxic compounds in e-cigarette vapor are [nine-fold to] 450-fold lower than those in the smoke from conventional cigarettes” – and that “at the blood levels typically achieved by smoking, nicotine does not result in clinically significant short- or long-term harms.”

California nonetheless insists on regulating e-cigarettes as tobacco products – including subjecting them to the state’s smoke-free laws, which apply to workplaces, schools, restaurants and public buildings – despite the fact that they contain no tobacco and do not produce smoke. On Wednesday, Gov. Jerry Brown signed such a measure, SBX2-5, along with four of the five anti-smoking bills passed by the Legislature in early March.

Given the benefits of e-cigarettes in helping people reduce and quit smoking, and the absence of evidence that they harm innocent bystanders, we lament that Gov. Brown and numerous local elected officials across the state and nation have failed to side with individual freedom and instead given in to nanny-state urges, unsubstantiated fears and misinformation.

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Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailybulletin.com>)

Here are potential winners, and losers, from California's minimum wage hikes

Minimum wages hikes will see winners, losers

By Kevin Smith, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Saturday, May 7, 2016



California's new minimum wage requirements are being hailed by supporters who say workers must earn a "living wage," but others fear the pay hikes will fuel layoffs, higher prices and more automation as businesses scramble to offset increased costs.

One thing is certain: No matter what side of the fence you're on, there will be winners and losers. Here are a few of the biggest from both sides:

Winners: Low-paid workers (with a caveat)

Fast-food workers, cashiers, parking lot attendants, security guards and others who are earning the state's current minimum wage of \$10 an hour are all getting raises.

Come 2017, their pay will rise to \$10.50 an hour. The following year it will jump to \$11 an hour, and it will keep on rising until it hits \$15 an hour in 2022. All told, that's a 50 percent increase.

But this comes with a caveat.

Economist Christopher Thornberg, a founding partner with [Beacon Economics](#) in Los Angeles, said minimum-wage workers with little experience will actually be at risk when the tiered pay hikes begin kicking in.

"The real effect will be felt by low-income workers," he said. "Employers will start hiring more seniors and get rid of entry-level people. They're going to say, 'If I have to pay more money, I want experienced people.' They just won't hire someone without experience."

Still, experts say low-paid workers who prove themselves and add value to a company could likely remain on board.

Losers: Restaurants, apparel manufacturers and other retail operations

California's biggest employers of minimum-wage workers will soon be facing increased costs. And those costs will have to be absorbed through higher prices, reduced employee hours, layoffs or automation.

Bob Machuca, a senior regional manager with the [Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.](#), said the apparel industry will definitely take a hit.

“A lot of small apparel shops that do manufacturing — the cut-and-sew companies that might employ five workers on the low side or about 20 on the high side — may cut back on hiring,” he said. “They may also lay off some workers.”

Economist Robert Kleinhenz, executive director of research for Beacon Economics, said some apparel businesses that employ minimum-wage employees will likely look to move out of state where worker costs aren't as high. And that could damage the unique synergy of Southern California's apparel industry.

“One of the benefits of doing business here in Southern California is that you can have the design as well as the fabrication of garments going on close together,” he said. “That allows companies to move fast and bring things to market more quickly.”

Yossi Kviatkovsky, owner of [The Rack](#), a Woodland Hills restaurant/sports bar that employs 46 workers, said restaurants will be forced to boost their prices when the minimum wage begins rising.

“This will have a devastating effect for restaurants and it will be reflected in the future prices of food,” he said.

Winners: Workers earning just above the current minimum wage

Thousands of employees who currently earn slightly more than California's minimum wage could also see a boost in pay. Workers who are now earning \$11 or \$12 an hour are likely to expect a pay raise when they see others below them getting pay increases.

And business owners will be obliged to give it to them.

“They will expect to get increases as well, and justifiably so,” said Paul Little, president and CEO of the [Pasadena Chamber of Commerce](#). “This goes beyond the minimum wage. If you are making \$12 an hour now, you'll expect to make more than that. It's called wage compression.”

The [Center for Labor Research and Education](#) at UC Berkeley looked into how many minimum-wage workers would be bumped up and how many others would get raises, too, and came up with the following totals: 1.9 million in Los Angeles County, 605,000 in Orange County, 339,000 in Riverside County and 331,000 in San Bernardino County.

Statewide, an estimated 5.6 million workers who either make minimum wage or more will see their pay rise as a result of the new law.

Losers: Job seekers

A study published in July 2008 in the [Journal of Labor Research](#) additionally reveals that minimum-wage hikes have a negative impact on job seekers. According to the study, a 10 percent increase in the minimum wage is associated with a 1 percent decline in retail trade employment and usual weekly hours worked.

David Neumark, a UC Irvine professor, agreed that some job losses will occur.

“I think the research evidence is overwhelming that a higher minimum wage causes some job loss for low-skilled workers,” he said via email. “I can say that it is very hard to find evidence that a higher minimum wage reduces poverty or spending on social programs, so it's hard to make an argument for clear gains for those with lower incomes.”

Winners: Landlords

Landlords also will benefit because the wage increases will enable more people to afford apartments, although a minimum-wage worker would likely have to be part of a two-income household in order to afford many apartments in Southern California.

Staff Writer Liam Truchard contributed to this report.

URL: <http://www.dailybulletin.com/social-affairs/20160507/here-are-potential-winners-and-losers-from-californias-minimum-wage-hikes>

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BILL NELSON: Empowering grand juries to serve the public

By [BILL NELSON](#)

2016-05-06 18:30:21

Earlier this year, Sen. Jeff Stone, R-Temecula, introduced Senate Bill 1292, sponsored by the California Special Districts Association, in an effort to increase the accuracy of grand jury reports released to the public.

As an association representing over 1,000 public agencies CSDA understands the important role civil grand juries play as watchdogs over local governments. Not only do I serve as the president of CSDA, but I am a former grand juror myself. I know firsthand the value of grand juries and the hard work and professionalism involved in each of the reports they produce. As such, when working on crafting the language in SB1292, it was essential that the legislation in no way compromised the integrity of the grand jury system, but worked to improve upon their value as a community resource and agency of change.

Grand juries are responsible for investigating any local government agencies they choose within the counties they serve. After their investigations, grand juries provide the public with a report that includes the findings of their investigations and provides valuable recommendations to address deficiencies, or identified problems, within a local agency.

While the majority of civil grand jury reports are accurate, and many provide positive remarks about the local agencies being investigated, some reports have been released that contain incorrect or inaccurate information.

Erroneous reports disserve the public, and are liable to undermine the credibility of an important grand jury system and the local agencies that serve the public.

For these reasons, CSDA found it prudent to approach Sen. Stone's office to address how to strengthen the grand jury reports.

SB1292 is intended as a measure to minimize the instances of incorrect and inaccurate information contained in grand jury reports without compromising the integrity of the grand jury process.

The bill provides workable changes that not only ensure the final reports are more accurate, but they also give more gravitas to grand juries and the role they serve in our communities. This legislation was crafted by CSDA in collaboration with the California Grand Jurors Association, who has joined CSDA in supporting SB1292.

To better understand the benefits of SB1292, one must first understand the process.

Under current California law, grand juries have the option of conducting an exit interview. During this interview, grand juries meet with the subjects of their investigations to discuss their findings. While some grand juries make it a practice to always perform an exit interview, each county grand jury operates differently and some rarely perform exit interviews.

SB1292 would make the option mandatory for grand juries to hold an exit interview to discuss their findings.

The intent of the exit interview is to provide local agencies the opportunity to provide feedback to the grand jury regarding the accuracy of their findings and allow the grand jury, should they so choose, to correct any inaccuracies discovered before publically releasing their report. This in no way undermines grand jurors but empowers them to provide the most accurate and robust reports possible.

The primary purpose of a grand jury's report is to point out problems or deficiencies within a local agency so

that an agency can address and correct the issues highlighted in the report. Requiring an exit interview will not only add validity to the report, it will further instill public confidence in the grand jury process and in their role as a watchdog.

SB1292 does not provide local agencies with any veto power over grand juries. Under this bill grand juries maintain full control over their reports, what to include or not to include. The bill does not limit which local agencies they choose to investigate.

Additionally, SB1292 adds an optional comment period for local agencies to respond to grand jury reports that will be publically released with the grand jury report. This will allow an agency to inform the public immediately on what they are doing to address any issues or deficiencies included in the grand jury final report. As a result of the mandatory exit interviews during the report drafting process, local agencies will have an earlier indication of what will be contained in the final report and should be able to provide well thought-out comments. An existing 60-day and 90-day mandatory comment periods for local agencies remains unchanged.

Nothing in SB1292 removes the independence of grand juries in any way. Under this bill grand juries continue to be able to write what they deem suitable about the local agencies they choose to investigate.

CSDA supports the watchdog role grand juries play, and believes their reports help improve government function. But, grand jury reports containing incorrect or inaccurate information diminish the important role these bodies provide for millions of Californians and does not best serve the public interest.

Bill Nelson is the President for the California Special Districts Association. Founded in 1969, CSDA a 501c(6), not-for-profit association that promotes good governance and improved core local services through professional development, advocacy, and other services for all types of independent special districts. CSDA represents over 1,000 special districts and affiliated organizations that provide millions of Californians essential local services such as water delivery, health care, vector control, fire protection, and public safety.

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LA Daily News (<http://www.dailynews.com>)

Despite a scathing audit, the City of Industry hasn't changed much in the last year

A year later, no adjustments to contracts, operations essentially the same

By Jason Henry, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Saturday, May 7, 2016

A year ago, a troubling audit found the City of Industry paid its former mayor's companies more than \$326 million over 20 years and put a spotlight on the manufacturing-heavy city of about 200 residents.

Today, the city says it's fixing those problems and more, but not everyone agrees the city is better off. The city has not rebid any of its contracts in the past year, though officials say they're reviewing each and every one.

Doug Johnson, a fellow with Claremont McKenna's Rose Institute of State and Local Government, said the city took a turn for the worse when it elected a new City Council in June favored by former mayor David Perez. They have since backed down on going after the city's former leader or the contracts that fill his coffers, he said.

"A year ago we had a city council and a city manager dedicated to unraveling this big ball of string that had enveloped the city," said Doug Johnson, a fellow with Claremont McKenna's Rose Institute for State and Local Government. "Today, all of that has been shut down. The city isn't looking at itself at all."

The controversy started when an [internal report](#) from auditing firm KPMG showed Perez's companies benefitted from lucrative arrangements that dated back at least 20 years. The audit, first published by this news organization, found that many of the payments were for vague or potentially erroneous invoices that may have resulted in massive overpayments. It spawned a [district attorney's investigation](#), a bill in the [state senate](#) to reform Industry and a [state controller's probe](#) that wrapped up in January.

The Los Angeles County district attorney's office began looking into the head of Industry's trash hauler and several other companies related to his family almost exactly one year ago following requests from County Supervisors Hilda Solis and Mike Antonovich.

That investigation, which questions whether Perez properly billed the city, remains ongoing today, according to spokeswoman Jane Robison.

Johnson, a local government expert, said he doesn't expect any dramatic changes in the city unless the district attorney's office brings criminal charges against Perez.

Since the criminal investigation began, Perez's flagship trash hauler Valley Vista has continued to make more than \$12 million through its exclusive agreement with the city. The arrangement, dating back to the 1970s, requires customers to send Industry their checks for Valley Vista's services before the money is passed on to the trash company. Industry takes 10 percent of more than \$1 million a month to cover its own costs.

Industry's previous administration sued Perez twice prior to the new council's election. One lawsuit

alleged Perez's company dumped on city-owned land without permission. The other accused him of contract fraud based on the audit and the criminal investigation.

The new council delayed both lawsuits after coming into office. Officials say they're now looking to settle the cases rather than taking it to trial.

Industry still dependent on its contractors

Industry's City Manager Paul Philips said the city wants to change its symbiotic relationships with certain contractors by making companies less reliant on public assets. Philips has hired new staff to oversee and review its contracts, but none of the contracts have come before the council for changes. The city purchased two electronic systems to help with bids and contractor costs, according to Philips.

He said he expects the review process for the city's roughly 85 contracts to take another two to three years to fully play out.

"We're not dragging our feet or making excuses," Philips said. "I think we're making headway."

It's starting small, but contracts like the one with Valley Vista will eventually undergo the same process.

So far, the city is focused on Industry Security Services, the Industry Manufacturers Council and the Homestead Museum. The security company uses Industry's vehicles to patrol. IMC received \$14.7 million since 2003 for advertising and promotion, but [a state controller's audit](#) couldn't determine what the city got in exchange. The council gives the Homestead Museum quarterly payments of about \$250,000.

"They've been joined at the hip with the city for so long, that they have to transition out of that," Philips said. "But we can't just cut them off and then they don't have the money to operate."

Most of Industry's largest contractors have been embedded in city hall for decades — some as far back as the city's founding. In January, the state controller's audit found Industry severely lacked financial controls. Philips hired an in-house city controller to help fix those problems, but the city outsources the rest of its finances to Frazer LLP. The city has used Frazer since the 1970s.

CNC Engineering, which runs the city's public work department and also its resort in the Industry Hills, continues to make more than \$300,000 a month from the city by consulting on nearly every construction project. Industry fired its on-staff public works director earlier this year and appointed CNC's owner instead. The engineering firm's invoices, like the ones that prompted the audit of Perez's companies, in some cases do not describe the work performed or even the project they were working on.

CNC employs councilwoman Cory Moss in her day job at the Expo Center. She works under Carol Perez, the wife of the former mayor's nephew.

Square Root Landscaping, which employs Mayor Mark Radecki and City Councilman Abraham Cruz, makes about \$150,000 a month from the city. It operates out of a city-owned building.

City Councilman Newell Ruggles said he thinks the city has made "quite a bit of progress," but more work is needed. Ruggles works for Haddick's Towing.

"Obviously, we need to take care of our inhouse controls before we can expand out and start looking more in depth at other contractors," Ruggles said. "We need to get our house in order first."

He said he agrees with Philips that more of the city's contractors need to become self-sufficient.

The progress with Industry's housing

Industry's new council started investigating the possibility of adding new housing in 2015, but the city has yet to determine how many units, if any, it will build. All of those homes would belong to the city and would be rented out in a similar way as the city's other properties.

Critics say Industry's housing creates a breeding ground for corruption and malfeasance. Roughly half of the homes in the city are owned by the city itself, and the other half are owned by David Perez; [86 of the 97](#) registered voters in Industry live in homes owned by one of the two parties.

Industry evicted five city employees from city-owned housing in the past year because of the potential conflict. It did not remove any of the city council members or the planning commissioners. Neither were their family members, most of whom have ties to city hall and to the city's highest-paid contractors, removed from their homes.

At least [two other people who were evicted](#) and who did not work for the city were known supporters of ousted city manager Kevin Radecki, who instigated the audit and lawsuits against Perez.

Ruggles previously called for changes to Industry's housing. The city rents the homes it owns at heavily subsidized rates. Tax experts say the city could owe [millions in back taxes](#) because the subsidy would count as income.

None of the residents submitted applications or even provided their income to the city, according to officials. There's no lottery or formal selection process. Nearly all of the tenants have ties to city hall.

"I think that housing needs to be made available and there needs to be some sort of system put in place that makes getting housing more transparent and open to the public," Ruggles said. "It's not the responsibility of taxpayers to provide subsidized housing to people that don't need it."

Ruggles said he also wants to see more housing built to diversify the city's electorate.

State senator fighting for systemic reforms

One lawmaker who is not waiting for the district attorney's investigation to be completed is State Sen. Ed Hernandez, D-West Covina. He introduced a bill earlier this year that would force Industry to only rent 5 percent of its housing to city officials, employees, contractors and their families. The bill includes reforms for the council's compensation and to its contract code.

Experts say the bill faces serious constitutional challenges if passed, but it has also led to negotiations with the city, according to city officials and Hernandez.

"I think progress has been made," Hernandez said. "I'm hoping there's more. There's right now very productive conversations with the City of Industry."

Hernandez said he wants to ensure Industry does not continue to be a "company town."

It has to change its housing and bring in independent voters to do that, he said. He wants the city to bring in a third party to build more housing and to form a truly independent housing commission who will rent its publicly owned homes based on need.

“They’re willing to have that conversation,” Hernandez said. “I can’t tell you we’re all going to agree at the end of the day, but at least we’re talking about it.”

Hernandez, who terms out in 2018, said part of the negotiations include bringing in an independent reform monitor, similar to what the City of Vernon did with John Van De Kamp after facing similar scrutiny. That would ensure the public continues to get frequent and transparent reports on the city’s reforms even after Hernandez is out of office. His recommendations are not dependent on the district attorney’s investigation because Industry has systemic problems.

Probes in the past haven’t been successful. The district attorney investigated but didn’t charge Industry officials in the 1970s and in the late 2000s. An FBI sting in 1984 did result in the arrest of six people, including Industry’s founder Jim Stafford.

The fervor to reform Industry at those times quickly died down after each brush with the law, at least until the next scandal cropped up.

Hernandez said he wants to stop that cycle.

“I’m more interested in governance and making sure the democratic process occurs without any undue influence,” he said.

URL: <http://www.dailynews.com/government-and-politics/20160507/despite-a-scathing-audit-the-city-of-industry-hasnt-changed-much-in-the-last-year>

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BUSINESS INSIDER

Cupertino's mayor is furious at Apple: 'They abuse us'

KIF LESWING

MAY 5, 2016, 10:46 AM

Apple is building a new \$5 billion campus in Cupertino, California, and is the largest employer in the city. So you'd expect Cupertino's mayor, Barry Chang, to have a close relationship with the company.

But the two are barely on speaking terms, according to a [report by Nellie Bowles in The Guardian](#).

In fact, when Chang last decided to pay an impromptu visit to Apple's campus, while he was a city-council member, before he was mayor, security escorted him off campus. "They said, 'You cannot come in — you're not invited,'" Chang told *The Guardian*.



Getty Images/Justin Sullivan

The city council these days usually votes with Apple, because, as Chang said, "Apple talks to them, and they won't vote against Apple." Chang links Apple's reluctance to work with him to taxes: He wants Apple to pay more, supporting a bill to levy \$100 million from Apple to improve infrastructure that was voted down.

According to the most recent statistics cited by Bowles, Apple paid \$9.2 million in taxes to Cupertino from 2012 to 2013. In the 2012 fiscal year, Apple made \$156.5 billion in sales. Cupertino gives Apple an [annual tax break](#) on business-to-business sales that started in 1997, when Apple was on the verge of collapse.

"In the meantime Apple is not willing to pay a dime. They're making profit, and they should share the responsibility for our city, but they won't. They abuse us," Chang told *The Guardian*.

But Chang's decision to speak out is the latest sign that residents in Silicon Valley, where Apple is rapidly expanding — its parking lots are overflowing, according to *The New York Times* — may want the tech giant to be a better neighbor.

Apple has not commented on Mayor Chang's comments.

'We pay taxes'

There's no doubt that Apple's considerable employee footprint puts stresses on Santa Clara County infrastructure.

Traffic around Apple's giant "spaceship" construction project can get hairy at times, and Cupertino has a [continually updated webpage](#) with details about road closings and traffic for that project, specifically.

Apple's burgeoning and secretive car project has [neighbors complaining about loud noises](#) in neighboring Sunnyvale.

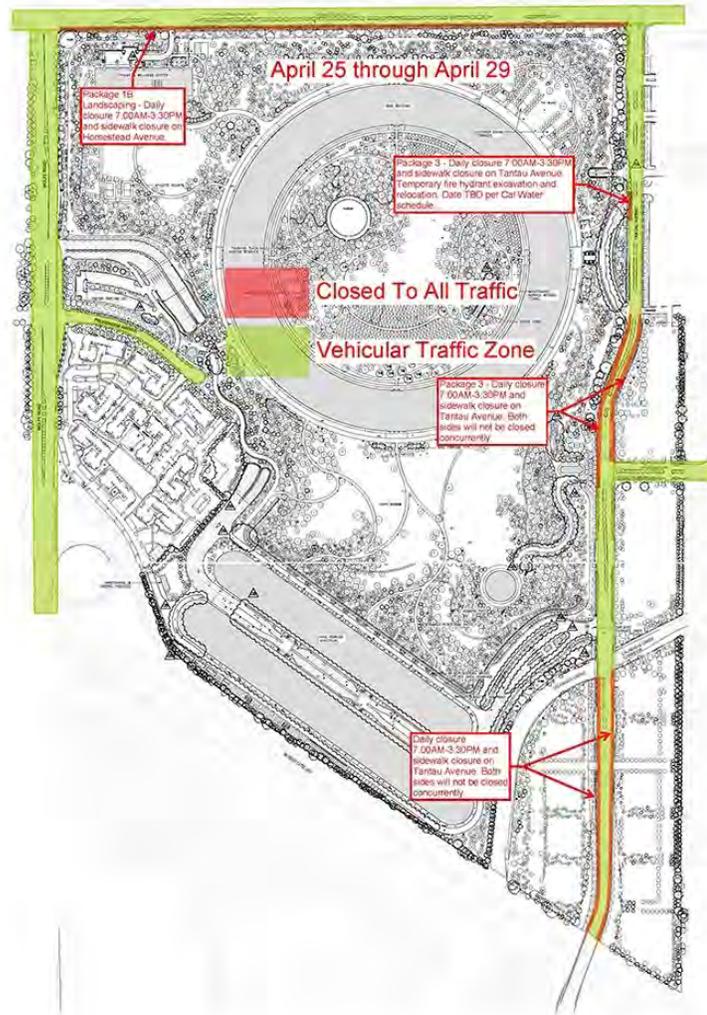
Apple's penchant for secrecy can also be at odds with government policies that emphasize transparency. California assemblyman Evan Low, who represents Cupertino and surrounding cities, organized a technology caucus trip to Apple last month to discuss "[key issues.](#)" A Low representative told me that Apple PR had told her that she could not name the Apple employees whom elected officials met with.

Apple's \$5 billion campus is expected to be completed later this year, with Apple employees moving in next year.

When Steve Jobs, then Apple's CEO, revealed the project in 2011, a city-council member pressed Jobs on what benefits Apple's construction project could provide the community, like the free public Wi-Fi network Google has implemented near some of its campuses.

Jobs threatened to move the project to neighboring Mountain View.

"I'm a simpleton. I've always had this view that we pay taxes, and the city should do those things," [Jobs said.](#) "I think we bring a lot more [to Cupertino] than free Wi-Fi."



City of Cupertino

Recent road closings around Apple Campus 2.



EDITORIAL: Closing the case on Riverside's outside attorneys

2016-05-05 16:57:42

The yearlong saga over the city of Riverside's spending on outside attorneys appears to be coming to a close.

Last year, an internal city audit reviewing \$19.4 million on such spending between 2010 and 2014 reported much of it violated city policies and lacked appropriate documentation, or even contracts.

The report, presented to the Government Affairs committee on June 3, 2015, prompted the City Council to put in place policies to ensure contracts be put in place with a panel of city-approved law firms. Additionally, the council required quarterly updates on external legal counsel used by the city. City Attorney Gary Geuss, for his part, has curbed his office's use of outside attorneys, using instead in-house attorneys, saving taxpayers upwards of \$1.5 million over the past year.

While such moves have been helpful in curbing potential lapses in oversight, the council majority has sought answers on how exactly such lapses occurred and whether there were any substantial breaches of city policies related to the procurement of external legal counsel. In March, the city retained the services of Northern California-based Hanson Bridgett to help find such answers.

At their April 26 meeting, the council received their first update, provided by Hanson Bridgett partner Steven Miller, who, while cautioning that there are still many unknowns, explained to the council that the preliminary evidence suggests nothing unusual occurred.

"There is no evidence of fraud or malfeasance by your then-city attorney [Greg Priamos]," Mr. Miller said. "The preliminary evidence suggests less than perfect administrative oversight of outside counsel, although I hasten to say that further investigation does not necessarily mean that further investigation would discover more skeletons in the closet."

"Sloppy" was a recurring characterization of the process of retaining outside legal services and the varying degrees of direct city council oversight over the expenses, which, Mr. Miller noted, weren't necessarily exceptional or overpriced. "I do not expect to find more than the sloppiness," he told the council.

The council seemed mostly convinced the preliminary findings and conclusions were sufficient, and instructed Mr. Miller to confer with the city's internal auditor before issuing a final report. Overall, we have been pleased to see the city show a willingness to assess the mistakes of the past and ensure that nothing illegal occurred.

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ASK THE EDITOR: As newspaper readership decreases, do smaller papers follow?

[BY MICHAEL CORONADO](#)

2016-05-07 23:05:45



Has the paper gotten smaller?

Dan from Norco had this quip: “If the paper gets any smaller, the paper person that delivers the paper is going to be shooting rubber bands into my driveway!”

Joking aside, Dan’s comment opens a larger conversation about newsprint and the size of newspapers in general, including The Press-Enterprise.

Recall from a previous mention that on a weekend day the amount of paper we use can stretch from Riverside to just outside of New York. That’s a lot of newsprint, and we’re a midsized paper. Imagine how much newsprint goes into the daily printing of, say, a Wall Street Journal or New York Times.

To answer Dan’s question, the paper he was referencing would have been a Tuesday or Wednesday paper, I imagine, from the date his email arrived.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are traditionally smaller papers not just for The P-E but from across the country. In fact, some news organizations that have chosen to reduce their paper distribution have stopped delivery on Mondays and Tuesdays. Some news organizations – newspapers, magazines – have gone all digital, eliminating the daily or weekly news print circulation.

Thursday through Saturday, the print circulation and readership generally increases, with Sunday being the largest readership day. That’s also the day coupons, inserts, special sections, additional editorial features and content generally get placed. It’s why the paper costs more on Sunday, too.

Sunday is also a day when news organizations, The P-E included, channel most of their resources to build the best journalism. We know there are more readers on Sunday than any other day, and we know we are charging a little bit more for that paper. We do our best to ensure the finest journalism ends up on that front page Sunday morning for readers.

Circling back to whether The P-E has gotten smaller in recent weeks – it has not. We are still carrying the same page count that we traditionally carry during this quarter. In fact, on given days we have expanded the page count in editorial – a result of a special advertising request that also increased the amount of news pages. Are we smaller than three or four years ago? Yes, the page count has decreased from three or four years ago but the column inches of editorial (stories, photos, etc., from our news team) has generally not suffered a substantial reduction.

For perspective, the satisfying news is that The P-E still ranks pretty high in terms of page count when compared with comparably sized papers of similar circulation and readership across the state and country.

As always, if you have a question about how the paper is put together, how we report the news or about

something happening in your community, please drop me a line at mcoronado@pe.com.

Have a nice Sunday.

Contact the writer: mcoronado@pe.com

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